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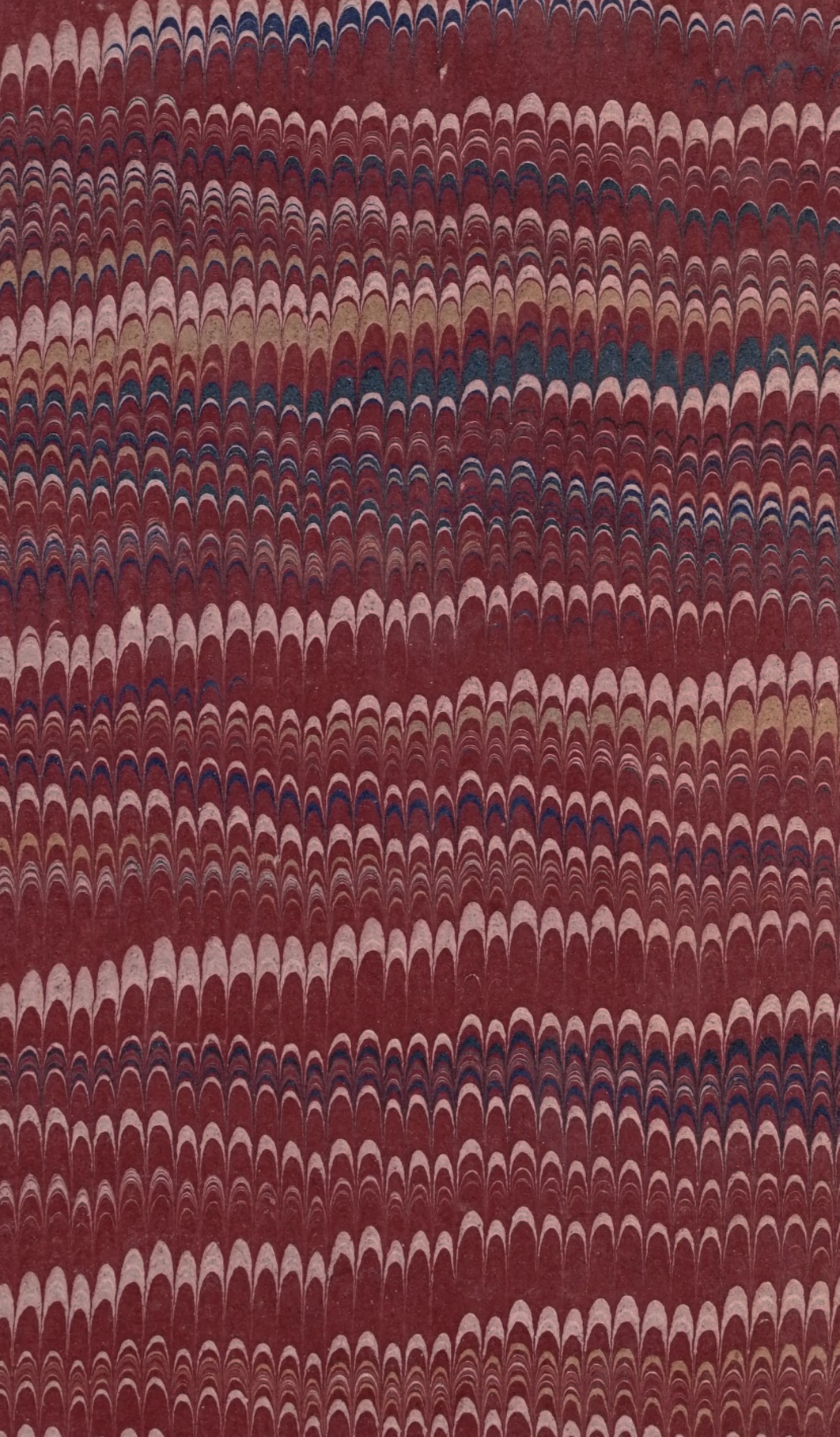

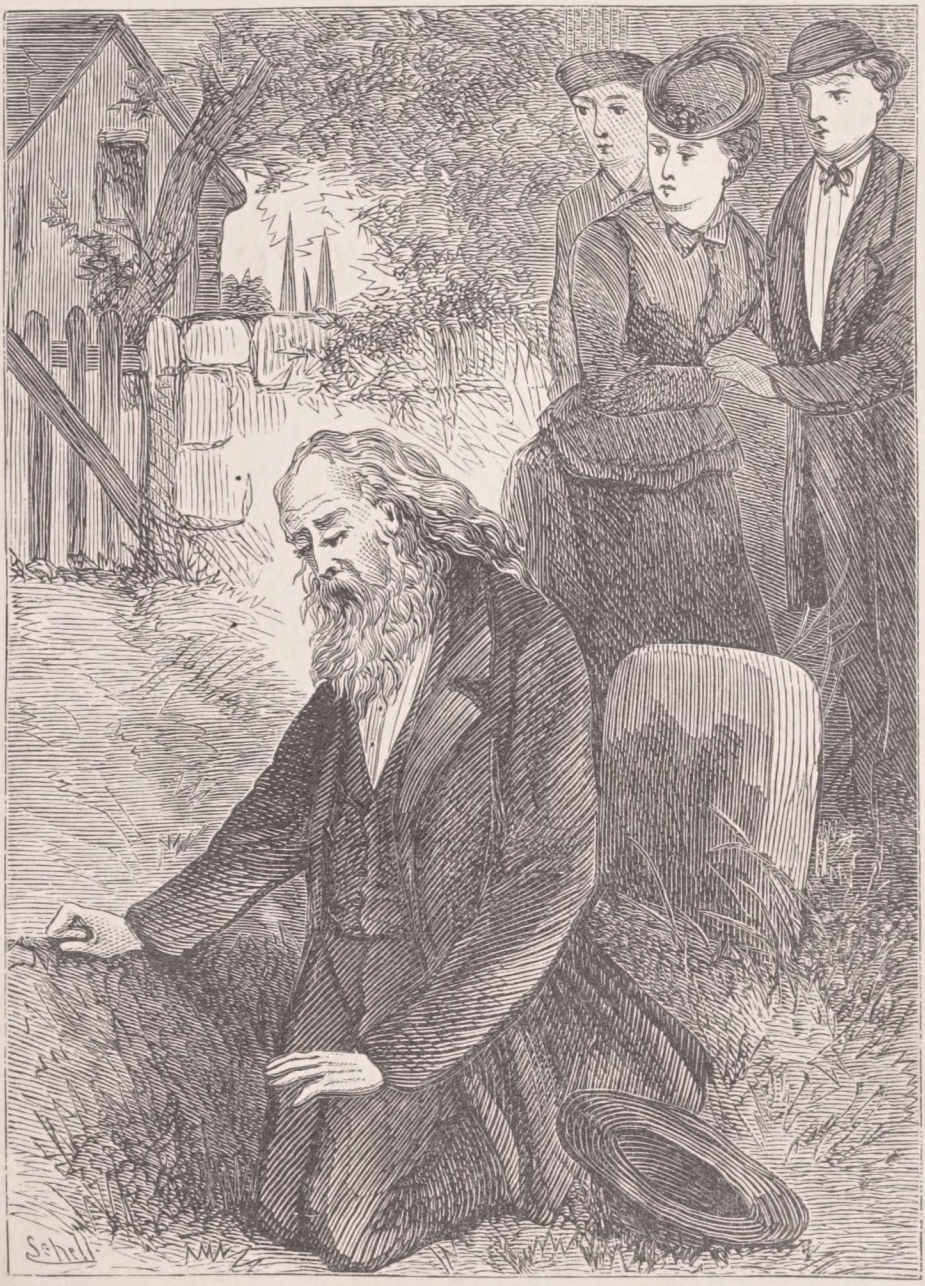

THE WRECKMASTER AT THE GRAVE OF HIS WIFE.—P. 288.

THE

WRECKMASTER.

Rev. John Howard Snyder

By KNICKERBOCKER, Jr.

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DAUGHADAY & BECKER,
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The Wreckmaster.

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THE WRECKMASTER.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF SOME OF THE CHARACTERS IN OUR VILLAGE.

EVERY village has its peculiar characters. There is always some one or more who stand out in bold relief as quite distinct from the rest of the community. They are noted for some habit or mental peculiarity; or they have performed some action which renders them conspicuous. It may be that they are heroes for a good distinguishing trait, or quite otherwise, and some vice or oddity may make them objects for mirth or pity: Our village was no exception to the rule, for we were favored with several of this sort.

There was, for example, old Mr. Monfort—Nicholas Montfort. Some called him "Old Nick," some "Santa Claus," but he was generally known as "Uncle Nicky."

He was a harmless body. And during my day he must have ranged from seventy to eighty years of age. He was a bachelor and lived in his nephew's family. He was wealthy, and in expectation of his property his near relatives were very indulgent toward him. While his mind was sound on all matters of money or real estate, it was decidedly deranged on the subject of witches.

He firmly believed in spiritual manifestations. And if he were living in the year Eighteen Hundred and Seventy, instead of Eighteen Hundred and Forty, he would have been accepted as a capital medium in spiritual circles.

He would tell his dreams, always declaring his belief in them as communications from the spirit world. He would, through these, render prophecies respecting the country, the church, and the world, and would recall facts in history which he declared he predicted would take place long before they happened. He kept a diary of

these revelations, and, to convince his hearers, he would turn to the date of the dream and compare it with the date of the event.

It was true that some things had occurred just as he foretold, but by far, the greater number of his prophecies proved miserable failures. But these he took particular pains not to mention, or conveniently to forget. In fact, they were chance shots, such as any one might make and sometimes hit the mark.

Uncle Nicky had a way, too, of walking through the grave-yard in the evening. And he positively asserted that he there met and conversed with the ghosts of his old neighbors, who had been a long time dead and buried. But he could find no one to believe him, yet he held to the belief all the same.

Once, when he was there in the afternoon, he saw the shadowy outlines of a human face upon a tomb stone. He had known the person buried there during his life-time. He visited the place often, but saw the profile only at a certain hour in the afternoon. He said it was a true likeness of the man whose body lay buried beneath the sward.

He mentioned this circumstance to a group of men and boys standing at the door of the village blacksmith shop, and to test him they demanded to be led to the spot. Uncle Nicky thought he was now in a fair way to gain a victory, and to make converts to his faith in the supernatural. So he agreed to lead us (I was one of the boys) that afternoon at four o'clock, to see the portrait of Mr. Van Deen (whom the older portion of the group had known) upon his tombstone as marked out there by the witches.

We went, according to agreement. And there, sure enough, was the perfect outline of the features of a man. It was a face of remarkable beauty, but the most prominent point, in fact and for observation, was the nose, which was decidedly Roman. Some of the neighbors agreed that this was Mr. Van Deen's face, while others remembered him as having a decided "*pug*" nose. But Uncle Nicky insisted upon it that it was a correct picture.

The circumstance created considerable excitement that night. It frightened us boys considerably. I was sent on an errand on that evening, to a part of the village requiring me to

pass through the grave-yard, for the wagon road divided it into two parts. I plead with my mother to put it off until the next day, but all to no purpose—go I must. Now, my mother was not at all superstitious, and laughed at the people for being duped by "an old crazy man." And I have often suspected that she made this errand on purpose to try me, and to cure me of any fear of ghosts or "spooks," as we called them.

I went on my errand, but I did not go by the main road. I must have made a circuit of three miles to go a distance of less than half a mile. Down through the barn-yard and around the corn-stacks, across Dubois's farm, and through Denton's door yard I made my route. And on returning the same way, I had the satisfaction of being chased by a man with a gun in his hand, who thought I was stealing watermelons, and had my pantaloons torn by the dog while climbing the fence, from which I fell into a ditch!

I presented myself in a sad plight to my mother, who, at first, laughed, and then took down an ominous stick that usually hung across the nails behind the door, and said she would

then and there drive the witches away from *her* house. And as she supposed them all to be concentrated in me she applied the rod. And I guess she drove them out. At any rate, I have never had any fear of grave-yards or ghosts since that time. And I thank my good mother for it.

The next day, a great wondering crowd gathered at the grave-yard gate. And I was with them. Uncle Nicky was on hand, engaged in telling his strange stories, and it must be acknowledged, he found more ready listeners than he had ever before.

Before the precise time arrived, an older brother of mine, a mischievous and impudent fellow, together with an acquaintance of his, had placed themselves before the stone to watch it. He had made a discovery. And so he thought he would have some sport. So just as Uncle Nicky brought up his throng to witness the strange sight and had told them all he knew about his deceased neighbor, my brother quietly stepped up and tore off the projecting bark of an old locust tree that stood near by, and behold, the shadow vanished!

Old Nicky was thunderstruck! The crowd looked at him and then burst out into a loud laugh. The old man skulked away as if ashamed of himself.

The explanation was very simple. The tree bark had so grown that when the sun was in a certain position it cast its shadow upon the grave-stone, and it so happened that it formed the outlines of a human face—one of those freaks of nature which are often observed.

Uncle Nicky, however, continued to believe in witches, although he never afterward mentioned this circumstance in support of his belief. He still had horse shoes nailed over the barn-door and over his bed-room door. He cast into moulds tiny silver bullets, which he always carried with him, together with a pistol. He believed that he could kill any evil disposed witches with these. And many a time have I stood by him when he was boiling a horrible compound of bones and cuttings from horses' hoofs, the refuse of chicken roosts, dog's hair, bran and rice, which he insisted drove the witches from the house, the stable, and the barn-yard. I have thought since how all this corresponded to

the offerings which some savages render by way of propitiating their evil deities. Uncle Nicky has gone to the spirit land now. Perhaps he sees clearer and knows more. We boys missed him very much after the grave had received him.

Another character in our village was STEVE LYLE. As I count the years backward he could not have been old at the time to which I refer, and yet, everybody called him "Old Steve." He was remarkable chiefly for his wit and idleness. He had a very large, buxom woman for a wife. They had no children. It was very fortunate that they had not. His father had left him a small house with a few acres of ground surrounding it. It was a very black looking house, from the fact that it never had been painted, yet the doors and window shutters were of the brightest blue color. The inside was always clean and neat, but the fences were down, the barn usually empty. The cow might answer for a lantern, and the pig had such long slim legs and such a slender body that it answered very well for a race on the course. These animals picked up their living from the roadside.

Old Steve was a general favorite at the store, where he spent the most of his time. His dry wit and frequent practical jokes served to relieve the monotony of the otherwise dull place very much. True, his wit was not always of a high order, neither were those who were ready at hand to express their appreciation of it. Sometimes, however, he would paint a story in such a way as to make him in demand to repeat it to the grandees, and even to the minister of the place. He never laughed himself, and drawled out his words between his frequent expectorations of tobacco juice in a manner entirely his own. You had to listen in spite of yourself Generally you would be repaid in the end. Sometimes, however, when he had a large crowd of listeners, he would begin a story and after drawling it out for a half an hour, during which their interest would become intensely awakened, he would abruptly get off the barrel upon which he was sitting and go home, leaving the crowd to laugh at their own folly.

He always originated the practical jokes for the holidays, such as the sack-race, the flour dodge, and the tree trick. He would, for exam-

ple, place a dollar on the ground about a hundred yards ahead, and then offer it to the first man in a sack who would get it. Usually the negroes of the place enlisted in this contest. And it was comical enough to see a half dozen stalwart black men with a salt sack drawn over their feet, enclosing their arms, and tied around the neck, trying to run! What tumbles! And when they reached the goal what struggles! for they had to pick it up with their teeth.

Then Steve would put a dollar in the bottom of a barrel partially filled with loose flour, and the man who could get it with his mouth was entitled to it. The poor negroes were generally the competitors in this, also. They drew cuts for the first chance. One minute of time was allowed for each effort. O, how we laughed at the curly heads and black faces covered with the flour! and at the puffing and blowing of the poor fellows in ejecting it from their mouths! Steve was always liberal with what little he had, and so kept the good will of the defeated negroes by treating them to a glass of gin.

Sometimes, on Fourth of July's, he would start the tree trick. There was an old liberty

pole in front of the store. Steve would grease this very thickly with ordinary wagon grease and tar after having placed a dollar on one of the steps, about twenty-five feet above the ground, and would make a contest for this. Sometimes the hand would be just reaching it when down came the unlucky wight, and another would make the effort, until, at length, some one succeeded. We all laughed to convulsions, and many even rolled on the ground, but Steve never moved a muscle of his face.

One of the most amusing things I ever knew him to do was to match his pig in a foot race with *Sol Larkins*, a noted lounger of the place. The pig did not taste real good swill very often. So Steve gave him a smell and a taste, after having secured him by a rope, and then started about a hundred yards in advance. He offered Sol the pig if he could catch him before the pig did. He was in a fair way of doing it when Steve threw the pail with the swill just before him. Sol tumbled, the swill spilled, and, just then, the pig jumped over him !

Well, Steve has gone, too. And I am now a

man. But these old times come back, and I ca n't help laughing even yet.

Then there were other distinguished characters. There was the horse doctor, TIM LEWIS. He became a homœopathist, and carried his practice to his horses and cattle. It was very hard to prevent the staid people of the village from laughing when he told them that a few pellets of Belladonna would heal the wound of a horse which had run a nail in his foot. He was eccentric, but very useful notwithstanding.

Then there was PETER ONDERDONK, the politician. He got to be quite a celebrity, although the people have never yet recovered from his first feat in the political arena. Peter had recently come from New Jersey, and was now a resident of Kings County, in the State of New York. He was very glib of tongue, and made quite an effective stump speech. The people took such a fancy to him that they elected him to the lower branch of the Legislature.

Now, Peter having come from New Jersey, had never heard of any other place for the Legislature to meet than Trenton. He knew at what time the session commenced. So, instead

of going to Albany, the capital of the State of New York, of which he was a resident, he went and reported himself at the State House at Trenton !

It soon became known. His political enemies made much capital out of this circumstance. But his audacity even conquered this terrible blow upon his want of intelligence, and he has since been to Congress. Verily, brass is more powerful than gold !

Not the least among the characters, however, was he whose title appears at the head of this chapter. His name was known to but few. It was upon the town records as HENRY SINGLETON. But every body spoke of him as "*The Old Wreckmaster.*"

His eccentricity manifested itself in keeping himself secluded. He would return the salutations of his neighbors with marked politeness, and tip his hat to the ladies whom he met in the most gallant manner.

He lived alone on the road leading down to the inlet harbor, and, at the time of this reference, had lived there for more than thirty years. I said he lived alone, but he had one negro

servant-man, who was just as quiet and non-committal as his master. It was noticed that, in their conversation, they always used the Spanish language.

In appearance, Old Wreckmaster was rather under size, stout and inclined to bend forward. He wore a full beard, which was gray, as was also his hair, which was nicely curled in thin ringlets which fringed his neck. His clothes, however, were of the shabbiest sort, not ragged, but dirty, almost filthy. He wore a flannel shirt and no cravat, and a thick cord about his neck, which might be for suspending a sailor's knife, eye-glasses, or a watch.

He was a mystery. The people respected while they feared to intrude upon his privacy.

His house was, in external appearance, of the shabbiest in the neighborhood. He cultivated a few vegetables, and there were a few straggling fruit trees near the house, which was protected on the roadside by a high board fence. The gate was always locked. He had a couple of fierce dogs, which were never permitted to leave the enclosure.

On several occasions of late, a coach had been

seen at the door with a liveried driver and footman on the box. A lady and gentleman and little boy were seen to enter the yard. They usually remained about an hour, and then drove away, the Old Wreckmaster standing at the gate and waving adieus as far as he could see them, the lady, meanwhile, kissing her hand, and the little boy shaking his handkerchief in return.

Old Wreckmaster made a weekly trip to the village store. At other times of need he sent Hernando, the servant. There was no mistaking the nature of his errand. He carried a little brown jug holding half a gallon. He did not stop on the way. He did not even ask for what he wanted, but placing the jug on the counter he waited until it was filled, paid for it without exchanging a word, except the customary "good morning," and then stalked home again. His jug was, at the same time, his friend and foe, his comfort and his tormentor. Need I say it contained *whiskey?*

I see him now—the little old man—jogging along with a hickory alpen stick reaching above his head, as every Saturday morning, about ten o'clock, he passed our house, carrying the little

brown jug. We boys all feared him. He seemed like a being from another world. When we went by his house we usually lowered our voices, as if some dreadful person lived there. And yet, once as I was climbing the fence and lighted on the ground just in front of him, he smiled very pleasantly at me. From that moment my interest in him increased.

CHAPTER THE SECOND.

SHOWING THE RESULT OF MY ACQUAINTANCE WITH "OLD WRECKMASTER."

HE had never been found intoxicated, although he was known as a confirmed drunkard. He did all his drinking at home, and even there Hernando said he had never seen him in a helpless condition. He, however, kept himself full, and managed to do away with a half a gallon of whiskey each week.

The people of our little village were surprised, therefore, by a report that the Old Wreckmaster had been seen lying by the side of the road in a state of beastly intoxication. They leaped to the conclusion that the cups were doing their fatal work, and that soon another character would disappear from the number.

But the people were mistaken. The old man was not drunk, but had been seized with an

attack of vertigo and had fallen. A neighbor passing by had seen him, and knowing him to be a hard drinker, thought, of course, that that was all.

Charley Cromwell and I had been out shooting snipe down on the bay shore, and on our return found him in the condition mentioned above. Although we both stood somewhat in awe of him, yet I was encouraged by the pleasant smile he once gave me, and proposed to cross over and help him.

He had then so far recovered as to be able to help himself a little. Seeing us standing near, he said:

"Well, boys, old age is doing its work. This is the third time I have been seized with these attacks."

I asked if we might not help him to his home. He hesitated a moment, and then as if talking to himself, said: "What 's the use. I must go before long. Boys, I will thank you very much to render me a little assistance."

So Charley supported him on one side, and I on the other, and helped him as far as the gate. It was locked on the outside by a pad-lock. Hernando had gone fishing. They each carried

ESCORTING THE WRECKMASTER HOME.—P. 24.

a key. He took his from his pocket and was just about unlocking the gate when he turned and looked steadily at us, and said :

" Boys, I have never allowed any of my neighbors to come into my house. I have my reasons for it. I may seem odd and eccentric ; but I am my own master and prefer to do as I please. I don't know how to do otherwise than to admit you two, but it must be on condition that what you see and learn there, shall be kept a secret until I am dead."

I was then eighteen years of age and Charley about a year older. We were both ready to enter college at the next term. I was somewhat romantic in my disposition and had read a good many novels. So that my imagination immediately conjured up various fancies respecting the Wreckmaster's history and mode of life.

And yet I hesitated about crossing the threshold of the house which was so wrapped in mystery.

Charley was a blunt, bold fellow. There was not a particle of sentiment about him. He simply thought he was doing a good turn in helping an old man home, and that perhaps by getting

acquainted with him he might get some ideas of fishing and sailing, and that perhaps he might hear a story about a shipwreck on the coast.

The Wreckmaster opened the gate, and immediately his two dogs—one a very vicious looking fellow, a bull dog with a row of teeth in his under jaw setting a half an inch beyond those in his upper jaw—and the other a magnificent water spaniel—sprang toward us. But a single word from their master made them as quiet as two lambs.

We entered the kitchen part of the building. This was in the wing portion having a shed roof and sometimes called a *lean-to*, a phrase corrupted into "linter"

He told us to be seated, after we had placed him upon an old settee, upon which were spread two or three comfortable although very much soiled blankets.

In the interval of silence I took the opportunity to look around the room.

The fire-place was large, one of those old-fashioned ones that can take in wood of the length usually cut and for sale in the market by the cord. In it, upon a huge crane which swung

on a pivot, were suspended two black iron pots and a tea-kettle. The fire had gone down, but at his suggestion I rekindled it, and it felt very comfortable, it being now in the early part of November.

Over the chimney piece hung a musket, and a basket containing fishing tackle. There were other articles used for hunting and fishing in different parts of the room. What most attracted my attention, however, was a little table apparently of ebony, over which hung a miniature picture of a beautiful child, done on ivory and exquisitely framed in what seemed to be solid, chased gold. The frame was about two inches in height by an inch and a half in width. Over the picture were a set of shelves held together by cords and filled with books.

The old man saw that my curiosity was awakened and told me that I could examine the books. I did so, and to my surprise found them to be of a very profound character.

There was a well worn copy of the Greek Testament, a copy of Homer and several other Greek classics, Horace and Virgil, and, what seemed more used than the rest, a copy of Cicero's

orations. Besides these there were volumes of history and poetry, all bearing evidence of having been repeatedly read.

I had completed my examination as far as I deemed it proper on a first visit, when my eye was arrested by a copy of what seemed to be a pocket Bible. The old man just then caught my eye.

"Take it, young man, yes, take it" he said. "You may look at it, although no eyes have seen it since—since—except Hernando's and mine."

I took it and found that it bore a rich purple velvet cover which was matted down as if by the action of water. It was held together by a gold clasp upon which were engraved the initials "C. S." Upon opening it, I found carefully tied with a faded blue ribbon a lock of yellow hair, which probably was once quite beautiful, but it now was crisp and dead.

I now resumed my seat. Charley had taken down the old flint lock, and examined it, and having asked a few questions of the old man about the haunts of certain kinds of fish in the bay, had already begun to manifest an impatience to go.

I was determined, however, to make the most of the rare privilege of being in the house of this strange old man.

So I ventured to ask him a few questions. I asked him how long he had been Wreckmaster? and if he had ever found any wrecks? and if there was anything of interest connected with them?

The old man smiled and said he supposed I did not know how much was implied in all those questions, or I would easily see that it was impossible to answer them that day or that week.

"But," he added, "I have no objections to giving you my history. I have long desired to have some one to whom to give it, both for the purpose of doing good to those who are growing up to be men and also for vindicating my own reputation which is closely linked with that of another whom I love more than myself."

I was surprised to hear this man who was set down as only a wine-bibber, a blot upon society, talk in this manner. I was prepared somewhat for a display of some degree of intelligence from his general bearing, but I did not suppose that

in the Old Wreckmaster I should find a scholar and a moralist.

He talk about "doing good!" He who was only a recluse of a drunkard! He talk about "loving some one better than himself!" He who was supposed only to exist as a beast exists!

He said that he could not undertake to begin his story to-day, but if we would come and spend Friday evenings with him, he would give it from week to week. We readily promised to do so, and rose to depart. He shook our hands heartily and thanked us for the service we had rendered him, and then repeated his request that we would not stir up curiosity about him, any more than we could help, and if asked about it, just to mention it as a matter of course that we helped him home and that he was not intoxicated. "For," said he, "while it is true that I consume a great deal of liquor, I have too much respect for myself to make a public exhibition of my degradation. Boys," he added, in a loud voice, "I am a poor drunkard. I can't help it. Time was when I could. But you can save yourselves from the terrible sufferings which

I have endured, if you will heed a poor inebriate's counsel. Don't touch the intoxicating cup. Shun it as you would the small-pox. It is Satan's most powerful instrument for evil. It causes more misery than all other evils combined."

Here again we were surprised by what we could not previously have expected—a temperance lecture from an old drunkard, and that not from one who had reformed, but from one who was yet indulging and who purposed to use the drink as long as he might live.

We bade him a good-bye with the hope of meeting on the following Friday evening. We had arranged for Friday evening because our Saturday was a holiday and consequently we had no lessons to prepare the evening before.

We had been seen by some one to enter the yard of the Old Wreckmaster, and it had already spread abroad. When we came to the blacksmith shop we were immediately beset, and all sorts of questions were asked as to how he lived, etc. Some expressed their regret that the old man was so far gone as to lie drunk in the streets. Others made sport of him, and others still seemed to be angry at him because, as they

said, "he kept himself like an oyster, shut up in his shell."

Both Charley and I, assured them that he was not drunk at the time he was found in the streets, and also informed them that we found him a very kind-hearted and unusually intelligent man.

They had all sorts of theories about his mode of life. Some said he had been a Tory in the war of 1812 with Great Britain, and was obliged to defend himself from public intrusion. Others that he had committed some great crime in some other part of the world, and he was obliged to live in a secluded spot. Others again, that he had been a pirate, and that there was a great deal of booty in his house, and that he had great treasure buried on some of the islands off the coast, and that he lived here and held the position of Wreckmaster only to keep watch over it.

Some said the time had come when he ought to be made to make himself known, and proposed to employ a detective to watch him, and particularly to find out who the grand people were who visited him occasionally with their coach and liveried servants. Others insisted that he was a good citizen, harmless, that he paid his taxes

cheerfully, and had been known in a quiet way to help along the poor, and that he had a perfect right to live as secluded as he pleased.

So the people were divided. Previous to this there had been little spurts of excitement about the old man. But they had soon quieted down, and they accepted it as a matter of course that he must be seen only on Saturdays going to and from the village store with his little brown jug.

Charley and I looked forward with a good deal of interest to the time when we should be permitted to hear from his own lips the history of that strange man. He had been an enigma—a mystery—to the whole neighborhood, and now we were to be the ones through whom it should be cleared up.

But we were not prepared for all that we subsequently received. Nor did we at that time anticipate that either of us should in any way become a part and parcel of his history.

Yet so it was. And both the eventful character of his own life and our own connection afterward with it, are of sufficient interest to engage the attention of all, and especially of my youthful readers.

CHAPTER THE THIRD.

WHEREIN IS CONTAINED AN ACCOUNT OF THE WRECKMASTER'S EARLY LIFE.

CHARLEY CROMWELL and I were ready in the early part of the evening of the next Friday to make our first visit to the Old Wreckmaster. It was with some misgiving on the part of my mother that she gave her assent. There was so much of mystery about the house and the man that she felt that I would be exposed to some unusual danger. And yet her curiosity was excited, and she as well as myself desired to know more about that strange man.

We rapped at the high wooden gate, and immediately the two dogs replied with a furious barking, which was followed by the quick step of Hernando, who took the precaution to look through a hole and then to ask, "Who 's there?" before he unlocked it. When assured that it was

ourselves and no others he admitted us, at the same time quieting the dogs by giving each one a hearty kick. He said that his master was expecting us, but he didn't understand it, as such a thing had never happened before.

We found the old man sitting by a blazing wood fire, the partially dried maple shooting sparks all over the room and crackling like a perpetual discharge of musketry. He rose on our entrance and extending a hand to each of us, expressed himself glad to see us and invited us to be seated.

There was a dignity about his bearing and the subdued tone of his voice which impressed me as becoming a man of culture, and of one far above the station which he seemed to occupy.

He was dressed, too, in very different style from that I had ever seen him before. His hair was arranged with the same care which had so often caused remark in the neighborhood. It was of a glossy grey, and hung in compact ringlets all around his neck. His beard, which was full and very long, was brushed out to its utmost extent. He had exchanged his old,

filthy-looking, red flannel shirt for a white one which had a full ruffled bosom and ruffles also at the wrists; besides he wore a white cravat, and a *magnificent diamond pin!*

We also observed an unusual cleanliness about the room. The floor had been scrubbed, and the dirty cover, which was on the lounge at the time of our last visit, had been exchanged for a clean one of striped chintz.

He took notice of our curiosity and seemed quietly to enjoy our surprise as we surveyed him and the room. And I confess to a little feeling of uneasiness and fear because of this sudden transformation in the man whom we all deemed a strange character, but yet, as nothing above the ordinary class of drunkards, except in the way of using grammatical language in his conversation.

"Well, boys," he said, "I guess you have looked long enough. But I don't blame you for it. Under other circumstances, it might appear like rudeness, but not so here. For you have been accustomed to see me only at stated times and in a rough garb while going on an errand which is not considered very respectable.

It 's all right. Don't feel uneasy," These last words were addressed to me, for in my confusion the blood had mounted to my temples.

"Now," continued the old man, "I have got a good deal to tell you. Some of it I have written down years ago, and I have it here, (taking down a roll of paper from the mantelpiece.) The rest I will give you by word of mouth. My object in this is three-fold. In the first place I know you (placing his hand familiarly upon my knee) are going to college. You will learn to compose. And I want you to make notes of what I say, and I will also give you this paper when I have done with it, and request that you will put the whole in the form of a book. This is the reason why I have admitted you two young men to my house. But this is only the means for the accomplishment of an end. If I only had a book published giving an account of my life, it would seem very egotistical, and it would be said that I courted notoriety. But, as you will see in the course of my story, I have been greatly misunderstood, and gross crimes have been laid to my charge of which I am not guilty. I do not now mean to

say that I have been entirely innocent of wrong, but that I am not the bad man I have been made to appear. I wish your book, therefore, to be my vindication. It will do me no good, for this old head will be sleeping under the sward long before your book will see the light, but there are others;" and the old man rose and pointed to the little miniature in the gold frame hanging on the wall. At this point he seemed to be deeply moved. His long beard quivered, showing that his chin was convulsed as if in a struggle with his tears.

"Then," he continued, "I have still another object in view, and that is to leave a legacy to boys and young men in the form of a warning against the use of intoxicating drinks. Whatever I have suffered in body, in mind or reputation—all that which has isolated me from home and society, and which has kept me so far below the sphere of influence and position that I am otherwise fitted to occupy, that which has made me seem like Cain, a vagabond against whom all men arraign themselves, has come from the indulgence of strong drink.

"You will think this strange in me inasmuch

as I continue to use it. Well, young men, I do use it. I can't do without it. And that is the terrible feature in a drunkard's experience. He becomes a slave to that which should be subject to his control. Yet I do not drink as I used to. I take it daily, but I do not become intoxicated. Once it was otherwise. Alas! it was otherwise! O, what I have experienced! But my experience is nothing when compared with the misery I have brought upon others."

Having recovered somewhat from the excitement of stating the three-fold object contemplated in inviting us to his house, he asked me to promise him that I would faithfully reproduce what he should say to us and give it to the world through some popular periodical or in the form of a volume. I promised, and I now attempt to fulfill my obligation.

I need not encumber the narrative with quotation marks, indicating when the Wreckmaster spoke and when we replied; but in the form in which he gave his story, with the incidents, serious and amusing, as they came from his lips, I will attempt to present it to my readers, supplying, however, some facts which his

modesty forbade him to mention, and which were procured from other sources.

The Wreckmaster began his remarks by saying that he was not what he seemed to be, but, on the contrary, that he was the son of a gentleman, and had enjoyed the advantages of a college education. In judging people from appearances grave mistakes are often made. And if some of his neighbors who pass him by on the road with a look of pity, or with a feeling of patronage depicted upon their face condescend to bow to him, could only be in the condition which his birth, education, and *present* circumstances allowed him to claim, they might have some reason for their pride, that is, if there is ever any good reason for one to assert his superiority over another.

This remark of the Wreckmaster was an evident allusion to Mr. Jacobs, the wealthiest man in our community. Because he was wealthy he seemed to imagine that every one was bound to do him honor. But, unfortunately, he had nothing else except wealth. His wife was ignorant, and his children were being reared only for display. He had tried to have his boys get the

foundation of an education at the district school, but they were too stupid to learn, and so extremely uncivil to the other scholars, who were not so well dressed as themselves, that the teacher had to request that they be taken from the school. Then he tried a private tutor, but he would not submit to sleep in an attic under the roof of a splendid mansion when there were many unoccupied comfortable rooms in the house, and so he left him. Since then the boys had studied *horses*. They knew all the points of a horse; all their diseases; the time the trotters could make on the course; and the pedigree of all the famous stock. Their rooms were filled with engravings of horses, of horses trotting with sulkies; of horses trotting under the saddle; of horses running on the course; of horses engaged in a hurdle race; of horses on a fox hunt; of horses on Derby day; of horses at the fair; of horses being shod, and horses in pasture. You can see the man in his meanness toward the tutor, and you can see the three boys through their horses, and can pretty accurately forecast their future from this view. The girls were a simpering, silly, do-nothing pair, lying

around all the day in slattern dress and slip-shod slippers, with a French novel in their hands. And this was the man that presumed to condescend to smile blandly upon the Old Wreckmaster, because, forsooth, he thought he was a poor, drunken vagabond.

They had recently had a little tilt of words in which Jacobs was worsted.

The Wreckmaster said that he guessed that we boys understood whom he meant, for he would not have them think that he entertained hard feelings toward any other of his neighbors, who, with this exception, had treated him with marked respect. Besides, he said some things would come out in the course of his story which would go far to show that old Jacobs had not very much reason to be proud even of his wealth. For he knew his lineage and his history, and had been cognizant of some things in his business relations which would not bear too close an examination.

Young men you have been to New York. Well, you have seen that row of buildings on the south side of Bowling Green, large mansions, and which are now occupied as shipping offices ?

In one of that row I was born and lived until I left my home, in 18—. My father was engaged in the China trade, and had ships engaged in bringing cargoes of tea. His office and warehouse were in Pearl street. He lived in princely style. At home he always sat with a silk cap like a Turkish fez, on his head, and clad in a magnificent cashmere wrapper, his feet encased in velvet slippers, wrought in with most exquisite designs by some native Chinese. His body servant was a Spanish negro, from the island of Cuba, and was the father of my faithful man here—Hernando. Hernando is a number of years younger than myself, but when a little boy he attached himself to me, and we have never been separated. We have seen strange things, and had some hard knocks, but he has never forsaken me. And all the money in this town would not bribe him to leave me.

My father usually spent the time, from ten to two o'clock, at his business, then returned home and dined at three, and drove out immediately after dinner. I was his companion in his daily drives until I left home. Sometimes we would cross the river, and take our course along

the bay to Fort Hamilton or Long Island; and sometimes we went directly up New York Island, and then again over the Hudson and across the great meadow to Newark, and beyond in New Jersey. It was during these afternoon rides that I chiefly received my education from my father. For in the early morning and in the evening after our return, he was alone in his library. There he was engaged in literary studies, which was his luxury. His business was completed at the office, but at home he was ever at his books. And I have now in my possession an annotated edition of Shakspeare's works by himself, in marginal writings, which money could not buy; so, too, of this Greek Testament, which I read every day. He went through it time and again. And you observe how full of writing are these blank leaves which he had bound up with the volume. And there were numerous other standard works in his collection which he read and re-read, and left with the impress of his thoughts upon their pages.

While I admired him for his talents, and now feel the elevating effect of such a careful, studious life, yet his seclusive habits produced

one very bad result, which subsequently affected my whole career. His wife, my mother, saw but little of him, and enjoyed his society scarcely at all. We were all together at breakfast, at dinner, and at tea ; then about nine o'clock in the evening we met for worship, after which I went to bed, and mother withdrew to her room, while father went into his library, where he remained until usually about one o'clock in the morning. This was our daily routine. There was no evening conversation, no games or plays in the parlor, no social gatherings. You can well understand that my life was very lonely, and that there was not that consideration for my years and youthful spirits that there should have been. Nor was my mother properly treated.

I lived in this way until the time arrived for me to enter college. My father was by no means indifferent to my education, for, as I said, during our afternoon drives he engaged me in conversation continually. But it was about my books chiefly. Together we declined the substantives and conjugated the verbs which were given as examples in the Latin and Greek grammars. And when I began to construe sentences we

usually took a text book with us. This afforded me a great advantage, so that my preparation placed me at the head of my class in college, which, for the first two years, I easily maintained.

Besides this, my father inculcated certain moral precepts, and imbued me with a reverence for the Bible, which I still hold, for, young men, be assured there is nothing like this book with its restraining power, its healthful precepts, its grand doctrines, its comforting promises, all of which are so perfectly adapted to all the checkered experiences of human life.

This much my father did. He should have done more. He should have remembered that I was a boy of warm impulses, possessing flesh and blood, and stood in need of rscreation and sympathy in my sports. Herein he failed, and to this I think I can trace the beginning of the troubles which afterward beset me.

He should have taught me something of the world, and showed it to me in its various aspects. He should have pointed out its temptations, the pleasures which were lawful and proper, and those which were sinful in them-

selves and in their tendencies. This he did not do. And, therefore, when I left home for college I was only a little child, with Latin and Greek in my head, and certain moral truths in my heart, but I knew nothing of the world.

I must, in order to be faithful to my early youth, speak of my mother. But this is a dark spot in my history. What she might have been had my father been more in her society I can not say, but that his well-meant seclusion was the cause of the trouble which came upon us, all through my mother's misconduct, I have not the shadow of a doubt.

I said we had no social gatherings, but my mother had company. A gentleman, in whom my father placed the most implicit confidence, came to visit her, and, at the first, it was one evening a week in her society, afterwards his visits became more frequent, although he always withdrew when the bell rung for prayers at nine o'clock.

Nothing was thought of this, but one day, when at college, I received a letter saying, that *my mother had eloped with Mr.* ——.

I will not dwell upon this subject, it is too

painful. My father immediately procured a divorce. After this, I never knew what it was to have a mother. I have met her, however, under other circumstances than those which surrounded her and myself in our elegant *house*—as I look back I can not call it *a home.*

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

WHICH GIVES SOME GLIMPSES OF COLLEGE LIFE AND ITS EFFECTS UPON THE WRECKMASTER.

I WAS under size and younger than my classmates when I entered college. The practice of "hazing" the Freshman was then in full force. Of course, the professors made a show of preventing it, but to no purpose. And it is remarkable that the same boys who were the most shockingly abused and persecuted as Freshmen were generally foremost in practising the same tricks upon those who came after them.

The first and most common trick played upon the green ones was "the smoking bout." They tried this upon me. Early in the evening of my second day at college a gentle rap upon my room door announced a visitor. Of course, I arose and admitted him with as much politeness of manner as I could master. What was my

surprise to find that he was a Senior! He had been pointed out to me that very day as the man who would, without doubt, carry off the first honors of his class. My knees almost smote together for fear! And yet I was wonderfully flattered and pleased. To think of the first honor man of Yale College calling upon a poor little Freshman, and that on the second day after his admission! But I very soon discovered that I was more fresh than I thought, and the honor not so great as I imagined.

For a few moments after there was another rap, and then another, and another, and another until my little room was full. They all announced their names, but beyond that there was no ceremony. On the contrary, there was a great want of it. They took possession of my chairs, my wood box, and then they jumped upon my bed. I did not know what to think of it. I felt angry, but knew that would do no good. I then felt like crying, but then I remembered that being in college I was considered *a man*, although I was but fifteen years of age. Besides, I knew I should be called a booby.

After singing a song in which my name frequently occurred, and which considered me as a poor little child just from the nursery and cast upon the charities of the world, (each allusion bringing out the most boisterous laughter) I was told, in grave tones, by the chief man, the chief honor man of whom I spoke, "that they had made me a visit upon important business, that no one was deemed duly matriculated in Yale College until he was *passed through the fires.*" I did not understand this, and was in fear of personal violence. They asked me if I had yet learned to smoke. I replied that I had not. Then they said it was time that I had. So they filled an old pipe with tobacco, and told me to make the attempt. I refused. They said that was very natural, but they must discharge their duty. So each fellow filled his pipe, and after stuffing the key hole in the door with paper they began to puff away. In a moment the room was filled. They put wood on the fire and made the place too hot for endurance. I coughed and gagged, and resisted to the utmost. At length I began to cry, and then nature asserted her claims. I was sick, O, so sick! It seemed as

if I were turning inside out! I fell upon the floor almost dead.

"That 'll do," cried the Senior. "The medicine is producing its effect. We 'll make a man of him." They all united in singing the same refrain as before, ending with the chorus "*Vive la more*," and then filed out of the room.

The Senior, however, remained. He lifted me in his arms and, with all my clothes on, put me under the bed, throwing one of the covers over me. He then aired the room for a few moments and withdrew.

This, then, I thought, is college life! O to be at home again! But then I remembered I had no mother. What a bitter night! I have seen much and experienced much since then, but except what has come to me through *the bottle* nothing ever equaled that awful night.

You will say that cured me of all desire for smoking. What do you think? The next night I bought a cigar, and before the week closed I walked the streets with that same honored Senior, both of us smoking!

There are habits worse than this, but they are seldom found until this one is confirmed. This is

the beginning of the end. If I had a voice that could be heard by all the boys in our land I would say, "*Don't smoke.*" It benumbs the sensibilities. It has a bad effect upon the morals. It lessens self-respect. And it lowers one in the esteem of others. Besides, it creates a forced false appetite. It acts injuriously upon the digestive organs. It produces restlessness, deprives sleep of its greatest relish, and unfits the mind for that calm investigation of subjects which is so important. And it is my opinion that it prepares the way for strong drink. And when drink has full sway there is less desire for smoke. So there are two classes of non-smokers, those who have never learned, and those who are conquered by strong drink. I need not ask which is preferable.

Although I had become so far a man and a regular student in college, my grief and mortification on account of the disgraceful affair at home took a deep hold upon me. It preyed upon my mind, and made me appear gloomy and morose. This was noticed by my fellow-students. Some of them questioned me about it. I evaded a direct answer. One of them had heard of the

affair and chided me with it. I replied by giving him a stunning blow in the face. To my surprise he did not strike back, but immediately reported the case to his classmates. He was a Sophomore.

That night three of them came to my room, and having mentioned the circumstance of the morning, they asked me if it was correct. I answered in the affirmative.

"Take it down, Jack," said the questioner. So Jack (as he was called) took out a paper and, making use of my pen and ink, wrote a record of the fact that on such a day such a conversation occurred between Henry Singleton and Matthew Taylor, and that Mr. Singleton, not having the fear of the laws of the college before his eyes, and not regarding the superior dignity and privileges of Sophomores, he, Mr. Singleton, being a Freshman in Yale College, did strike the said Mr. Taylor with his clenched fist in a fit of anger. Whether the provocation be just or unjust is not for the committee to decide. They therefore refer the matter for trial to the *Amphictyonic Council.*

I did not know what that meant, but supposed

it was some mode of punishment adopted by the college authorities for the violation of their rules.

The committee left me with a respectful "Good night," and I threw myself upon my bed wondering what would come of it.

The next day, after the visit of the committee from the *Amphictyonic Council*, I missed my lessons, that is to say, in one of the recitations I "fizzled," and in another I "flunked." A "fizzle" is an imperfect lesson, a "flunk" is a total failure.

As a consequence of this I was asked to wait after hours to meet the faculty. This was my first failure, so I hoped for mercy. The professors spoke kindly to me, told me that generally I had been regular in attendance and understood my studies, but they had latterly noticed a growing indifference, and my manner indicated some trouble preying upon my mind. The one nearest to me put his hand upon my head and stroked my hair, and asked the cause of this. It was a private matter, so I was determined I would not tell. And I did not, and, although the big tears stood in the corners of my eyes, I

set my teeth firmly together and said nothing. I consequently got the credit of being very stubborn. The President of the college then gave me a severe reprimand and sent me to my room.

This new mortification made me desperate. I determined that, come what would, I never would enter the class-room without perfect lessons. And I did not until the end of my Sophomore year.

I hoped that this was what the Sophomores, on the previous evening, meant as the *Amphictyonic Council.* But I was very much mistaken. For that evening, just after we had returned from prayers, some one knocked at my door, and, as I opened it, four men with masks entered, and, without saying a word, took me by force to the South College, and up-stairs to the highest part of the building. One of them then gave a rap with his cane upon the upper panel of the door, at the same time saying, "Open ! Open ! Open !" in a deep, sepulchral voice.

The door was opened and not a word was spoken. It was pitch dark. I was led three times around the room in one direction, then

twice in the opposite direction, and then by unseen hands was thrust this way and that, and twirled about without ceremony, and not very gently either. I was then blindfolded and my hands tied behind me.

Then a voice, which I recognized, (and I marked it, too, in my mind,) read the record of the committee which visited me the previous evening. At its close he asked me in reference to the charge of striking the Sophomore, "Guilty or not guilty." With trembling voice I replied, "Guilty, but——"

"Hold on," replied the same voice, "no qualifications are allowed. No excuse can be urged for a Freshman to use violence against a Sophomore." And then, after a grand flourish of eulogy upon the Sophomore class of Yale College, of their dignified position and the figure they were destined to make in the world, he took the opposite line of remark and spoke of Freshmen as babes just from the arms of the nurse, who had not yet shed their milk teeth, and who, assuming to themselves privileges beyond their years and their station, needed an example of thorough discipline.

He then said, "Counselors, what say you?" And there came forth in a volume of base sound, "To the death!" "To the death!" "To the death!"

Addressing me again the chairman or judge said: "Young man, you hear the sentence pronounced against you. These gentlemen, members of the Amphictyonic Council, pronounce sentence of death against you. It, however, remains with the judge upon the bench to modify or repeal this verdict, but only upon conditions to be hereafter specified.

They then unbound my eyes, and as I looked around I saw a hundred faces in hideous masks, with tattoo marks of blood upon the cheeks, and great red crosses hanging on their breasts.

Four of them arose, and in solemn procession entered an adjoining room and brought out a coffin, which they placed directly in front of me. On it were two grinning human skulls! I shuddered as I looked, and really believed they were going to put me to death.

They then approached me, untied my hands, and began to strip me. I attempted to remon-

strate, but instantly a hand was placed upon my mouth. I was compelled to submit to the degradation, and was placed naked in the coffin. It was then carried around the room, the lights being extinguished, and brimstone was burned in a dish, the fumes of which were allowed to pass through a hole in the bottom of the coffin. All this I was obliged to inhale.

This ceremony finished, the judge came to me and said: "Here is a cup. It contains the hemlock by which the great Socrates entered into the shades of the spirits." Then he bade me look up, and I saw a sword suspended over my head. "This," he continued, "is the sword of Damocles. It hangs by a single thread. We are merciful. You may choose by which of these you will die."

I was almost dead with fear. I could not articulate a word. It seemed as if my throat were swelled to three times its usual size. I must have swooned, for from that point I remembered nothing. It was late the next day when I awoke. I was still naked in the coffin. After a long effort I recalled the scenes of the previous night. I got out of the box and dressed

myself. I looked at the cup and at the bottle that stood near it, and found it labelled "Whiskey." I saw there was some left in it. I had been drugged with the liquor. Over the door was a written caution — "*Remember, and treat the Sophomores with respect.*"

This treatment, in the early part of my college life, together with my domestic grief, wrought upon my sensitive nature until it produced a morbid melancholy. I also thirsted for revenge. With the faculty I could get it in no other way than by regularity and perfect lessons. With Mr. ——, who had destroyed all the pleasure of my home, I longed for a day in the future. With the leader of the Sophomore gang, who so horribly persecuted me, I determined to get it at any price, and in any way that circumstances favored.

This was my condition when I closed my first year in college. My standing in my class had been reported to my father, who was delighted. I returned to his house, only to find a blank, dreary, unwelcome place.

I had not yet tasted of liquor, not even the wine upon my father's table. I had learned to

smoke, and my life had become embittered, and I found revenge a sweet passion to cherish. It seemed as if these things were conspiring for my downfall.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

GIVING SOME VACATION EXPERIENCES.

I HAD passed through my Freshman year at college. My return home was a pleasure, but yet weighed down with the great sorrow caused by the unnatural loss of my mother. If she had been dead I could have borne it more easily, but the disgrace attaching to it stung my pride and mortified me exceedingly.

My father received me with more manifestations of feeling than I had ever before witnessed. He took me into the library, and, with much emotion, told me the whole story. He then charged me never, in his presence, to make any allusion to her, as he strove to forget that he ever knew her.

I have often wondered since if he thought of how much this prohibition carried with it.

I was never to mention that dearest to me of all names—"Mother!"

My heart was ready to burst! I must have been made up of a strange compound. My grief and mortification were largely surcharged with anger. And without giving it expression in words, I had in my heart already made a vow of *revenge!*

This feeling was nursed by my loneliness. Father kept his study as usual after business hours. He had even given up his after dinner drives. So that I saw him only at meals, and at prayers. And then he seemed so absorbed with his own thoughts, as scarcely to address a word to me. So that for the first fortnight I was left entirely to myself.

At first I wandered up and down Broadway, looking at the various objects of interest, and studying the faces of that interminable procession of humanity, which flows, like the tide, through that magnificent thoroughfare. But I soon wearied of that. Each day came to be as the last, until I longed for some new excitement.

One day I stopped in front of the Park Theatre, and read the bill of performances through. A

star actor from England was that night to make his first appearance. The play was to be "Othello," from Shakspeare.

Now my father had made a special study of the great dramatist, and often in our rides, in former days, would quote many long passages from his works, and point out their beauties, and show how true to human nature he was in his delineations of character. And "Othello" was one of his favorite plays.

I thought, as I read, how I should like to see this play rendered by a professional artist. But my education had excluded theatrical performances from the list of my amusements. So that I turned away with a sigh, wishing that I had a little more liberty, at least enough to allow me to see a play of such a character as "Othello."

Just then I felt a familiar slap on my shoulder, and turning met the eyes of one of my classmates.

"Halloo Classmate," he said, "I'm glad I met you. Are you going to see Kemble to-night. I saw you reading the bill just now."

"Well, no," I replied, "I—I—guess not. Father don't like me to go to the theatre."

"O pshaw!" he said, "Mine doesn't like it either, and I have a regular fight with the old lady every time I go. But you know they have to let me do as I please."

I was shocked at this mode of speaking of his parents. But, then, I knew Shaw (for that was his name) to be a real good fellow. He was at least two years older than myself, and I began to think that I must be a little soft or green, and that he talked and acted more like a man.

I asked him what time the theatre let out.

He said he guessed about eleven o'clock, and then the people generally went to some saloon and took some oysters or ice cream, and got home about twelve.

I then told him that I thought I would not go. For I knew that if I was not at prayers at nine o'clock, that my father would inquire where I was.

"Well, Singleton, here take a cigar, and let's take a walk up Broadway."

I took the cigar, and Shaw put his hat on one side of his head, and we started.

He was dressed in very flashy style. His coat was the swallow-tail pattern. His gloves were

tan-colored kids. His boots polished to perfection. His breeches were a rich brown velvet, and buckled around his black silk stockings, at the knee, with a broad silver clasp. And he wore a cockade. For these were the fashions in those days. I looked upon him with perfect admiration, and said: "O, that I were such a man."

I felt proud to be in his company, and thought that every body that looked at him admired him, and also envied me his society.

We strolled into a couple of picture galleries, and Shaw pretended to point out the finest paintings. He did this in so loud a voice as to attract the attention of others present.

"There," he would say, "that is a genuine Dutch picture. I could tell that as far as I could see it. Don't you see how they render every thing just as it is, and without any regard to effect? That cow in the foreground is full size, and so are those deer a quarter of a mile off, and yet no allowance is made for the distance. And see that rooster on that church steeple. Why, it looks as if they had no thought that that height would diminish the apparent

size. By the way, Singleton, you are a Dutchman—why do they always have the cock on the church spire?"

He said this with such an air and such a tone of voice as to make the by-standers burst out into a laugh.

I felt considerably nettled, and felt the blush burning my face, and innocently replied, that I did not know.

Just then an elderly looking gentleman stepped up and said, "Perhaps I can help you, young man." I immediately recognized our pastor, the great John A. Livingston, although he did not recognize me.

He turned to Shaw and asked him if he read his Bible.

Shaw with a swagger said: "I used to, but I have got beyond that now."

"Got beyond it, have you?" said the clergyman, laying his hand gently upon his shoulder. "Young man, never get beyond reading the Word of God. Now, if you had been familiar with it, you could at least have adopted a theory for the cock upon the steeple. Don't you remember reading of Peter, who said he would

never deny his Master, and the Lord saying that he did not know his own heart, but that he would deny him that night before the cock should crow? Our Holland fathers from this circumstance thought this would serve the double purpose of a weather vane and a symbol. It could warn the people and say to them, 'Watch, lest ye enter into temptation,' and at the same time indicate the direction of the wind. There is a lesson in this, young men. Never deny Him who bought you, and be watchful against temptation."

Shaw looked crest-fallen, and finding the eyes of those present fixed upon him gave me a nudge on the elbow and said, "Come, let's go."

It was near my dining hour, so I tried to excuse myself to go home. But Shaw would not listen to it. He said we were "in for it," and might as well "make a day of it."

I yielded to his persuasion, and we went into a sort of restaurant and drinking saloon known as "The Pewter Mug."

Shaw ordered oysters and ale. I had never tasted ale before. O, how bitter it was! Every mouthful made me draw my lips. But Shaw

drank his down almost at a gulp, and rapped upon the table with his knife, and cried out, "Here, waiter, give us a glass of 'alf and 'alf." Then he asked me "to be filled up." I declined, but still continued to drink what I had in my glass.

After awhile my head began to swim, and I became quite talkative. Shaw gave me a cigar, and I began to smoke. The close room, the fumes of tobacco and the ale together, made me feel quite sick. However, I stood it out.

We whiled away the time until evening, when I told my companion that I must return home, as my father would be anxious about me since I was not there to dinner.

Again he would not hear of an excuse. I then thought of what Dr. Livingston had said about temptation, and determined I would go.

So we crossed over into Chatham Street, and walked down until we came opposite the theatre. There was a great crowd there. Shaw said "there was a rush for tickets," and asked me to wait until he procured one for himself.

It took him some time to do this, so I amused myself by listening to the conversation of the

crowd. All seemed to be enthusiastic over the newly arrived actor. They talked about the Kemble family as all being actors; about the elder Kemble and Mrs. Siddons and Garrick. They spoke of his passion in his plays as being so powerful as even to frighten his fellow actors. Others said they would not miss the opportunity of seeing him for a hundred dollars. Before Shaw returned I was wrought to a very high state of excitement, and regretted that I had not told him to procure a ticket for me. I then determined to place myself in the line and get one anyhow, and had just done so when the cry came, "The office is closed. Every seat is sold."

The crowd began to disperse, some grumbling, and others cursing their ill-luck, when Shaw came running to me and said, "See here, Singleton, I've got 'em," at the same time displaying two tickets.

"But you've got two," I said.

"Of course, I have," he replied. "Do you think I'd desert a friend in distress. Now, see here, classmate, this here ticket is for you, and you are going to the Old Park to-night and see

Kemble play Othello. There 's no 'nay' to that, you know. Heigh boy ?"

He put his arm through mine, and again we sauntered. We had about two hours yet before the doors of the theatre would be opened.

"Come along," he said, "and let 's see a little life."

He led me down Barclay Street, pretty near to the wharf on the East River. He knocked at the door of what seemed to be a private residence, which was opened immediately by a colored man, who greeted Shaw with a smile of welcome. Shaw winked at him, and I overheard him say, "a bird."

I did not know, until some time afterward, what this expression meant. I found out, however, that it was one "to be caught and plucked." It was a gambler's phrase, and we were in a gaming house.

The hall and stairs were richly carpeted, and the little parlor we entered resembled, to all appearance, the reception room of a gentleman's residence.

A negro boy came and took our hats and canes, and asked if we would send up our cards.

I handed my visiting card—the first I had had engraved. Shaw handed his, and wrote something upon it in pencil, and the boy disappeared.

In a few moments he returned and asked if the gentlemen would have some refreshments. We followed him into an adjoining room where was spread a table, around which were seated a number of fine looking and well dressed gentlemen.

We were waited upon very attentively, and in the most courteous manner. Shaw asked the waiter for some "green seal." The waiter brought a pint bottle with a French label, on which I saw the word "Champagne." The waiter was about to uncork it when Shaw took it from his hand, and with the back of his knife gave the neck a single blow which cut it as clean as if it were wax. This feat attracted the attention of the other gentlemen present, who seemed to admire it very much.

One of them left his seat and came directly opposite to us.

"Ah, Shaw! I thought that it must be you. There 's no one can uncork the green seal as

you can. But where have you been? I have not met you at our club for a long time."

"Been? Why, at Yale College. I am now duly matriculated by order of the Pater Familias into the mysterious order of Freshmen, and am henceforth to look upon Collegium Yalensis as my Alma Mater, until I shall attain ad gradum Baculaurei in Artibus, by the favor of Praeses, Curatores eb Professores—that's how the cow runs."

This speech, uttered in his usual loud manner, caused all present to burst out into loud laughter.

Shaw passed the bottle across the table, and invited his friend to drink to the health and future prosperity of Henry Singleton.

This mode of introduction obliged me to rise and make my bow to the gentleman whom he called "Jones."

I swallowed the contents of my glass, which was the most delicious draught I had ever tasted. We three then engaged in a lively conversation while we partook of other delicacies, which were furnished us very bountifully.

"I say, Singleton," said Shaw, "This fodder

is not to be despised, eh? especially when we get it all for nothing."

"Yes," said Jones: "Our landlord is very liberal. All his patrons are well cared for *as to* 'the inner man.'"

"You speak after the fashion of the Greeks," replied Shaw. The allusion was to the phrase *as to* which is the usual construction of a certain Greek preposition.

"Of course, I do," replied Jones, "I never went to college, but you know my father is a clergyman, and I was pretty well drilled in the rudiments of the dead languages."

I began to think I was in good company after all. Here I had the son of a clergyman for a new acquaintance, besides a good dinner, and pleasant, intelligent society.

I tried to quiet my conscience with these considerations, which had disturbed me very much since I entered the mysterious dwelling. Besides, I could not help thinking, all the while, of the advice Dr. Livingston had given us that morning.

By this time the wine began to work, and my tongue was loosed. I talked very rapidly, and,

I expect, very foolishly. Shaw asked me for a song, and all the gentlemen present who had finished supper gathered around us, and echoed his words, "A song! a song!"

I had a good voice, and had learned several very pretty airs. So I sung. My effort was received with rapturous applause, and all came forward and shook hands with me. One called for more wine, and they all drank my health. I took a second glass, and then followed Shaw into what he called the "Sanctum sanctorum," or the "Penetralia of the Temple."

Here were a number of small tables, at which were seated gentlemen, in perfect silence, engaged in card playing, a little pile of gold lying between each pair.

Jones invited me to try a hand. I told him that I had but very little acquaintance with cards, but yet consented. I put down a five dollar gold piece, and he matched it. We played, and I won! Elated at my success, I was about to put down the ten dollars for another trial, when Shaw said it was time to go to the theatre.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

NARRATING SOME VACATION EXPERIENCES OF A DIFFERENT CHARACTER.

THE wine I had taken, the brilliant lights of the theatre, the crowded and well dressed audience, together with the novelty of the occasion, almost turned my brain. I seemed to have entered a new world, and wondered why I had been prohibited from enjoying such pleasure for so long a time.

When the curtain rose there was a thundering round of applause, and when Mr. Kemble stepped forward and made his bow the whole mass rose to their feet. They shouted and cheered as if their throats would burst. Ladies waved their handkerchiefs. I joined with them most heartily. Indeed the excitement had already worked upon me to that extent that before the play had fairly begun I was moved to tears.

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I watched every particular with the most intense interest. Being familiar with all the parts of the play, it all seemed instinct with life. It lost its fictitious character and became, to my mind, a reality. And when at length Othello went to the bed-side of his sleeping wife and smothered her, I rose to my feet and cried out at the top of my voice, "Stop him! Stop him! Murder! Murder!"

Shaw pulled me down to my seat, and said, "Why, Singleton, you are making a fool of yourself." The attention of the audience was turned to me, and although the terrible tragedy was going on before their eyes, they burst out into loud laughter.

I was mortified, and sunk down into my seat ashamed of myself. And to add to my chagrin a police officer tapped me upon the shoulder and said, "Young man come with me."

Shaw immediately interceded for me—told him that it was the first time that I had attended a theatrical performance, and assured him that there would be no more disturbance. Several young men came across the gallery who proved to be my college-mates. They had recognized

my voice, and forseeing difficulty had come over to my assistance.

The officer withdrew, but I plead with Shaw to let me go home. And as the main play was just closing, he concluded to go with me.

Kemble came before the curtain in response to the loud demand of the people, and acknowledged the compliment they had paid him upon his first appearance upon the boards of an American stage, and added, that the involuntary exclamation of the gentleman, in the final act of the tragedy, was the best testimonial to his attempts truthfully to represent the genius of Shakspeare that he had ever received.

I was thunder-struck. Without intending it I had become a hero. I took Shaw's arm, and together we hurried into the street.

Shaw insisted that I was in a too high state of excitement to return home immediately, and proposed that we should wait awhile in the bar-room of the old Merchant's Hotel.

I seemed to have had no will of my own that night. Of course, I assented. And we took some more wine, one, two—three glasses!

That is the last I knew of myself. The next

day I awoke about eleven o'clock in the morning, and found old Pierre (Hernando's father,) standing by my side.

I asked him what it all meant. He told me in few words that I had been brought home in a state of intoxication, and that the gentleman had assisted him in getting me to bed.

I then asked for my father. Pierre said that he had inquired about me and came in the room before he went to the office and looked at me, and gave two or three expressive—ahems—and said, "That boy must be attended to."

I did not know what this meant, but I feared something terrible.

The result was made known sooner than I expected.

Pierre brought a note from my father telling me to get my clothing ready, as he wished me to spend the remainder of my vacation in the country, and that some friends would call with a carriage at three o'clock that afternoon with whom I was to go. He did not say where I was to go, nor with whom. He also sent an ample sum of money, and added in a postscript, "Enjoy yourself rationally, but do not *become a beast.*"

And this was the penalty for my disobedience and my gross dissipation! Its very mildness drew me more closely to my father than I had ever before been.

The friends came at the time appointed. I found in them old acquaintances of our family, and one of them a young man about my own age and his sister two years younger.

I was informed that we were destined to spend the months of July and August at Plattsburg, on Lake Champlain. This place was shortly afterward the scene of a battle between the American and British forces.

We took a sloop from one of the upper piers on the Hudson river. Those were different days from the present. We were four days sailing to Albany. We then took a stage to Ballston Springs, where we remained for three days. And then again we went to Ticonderoga, and took another sloop for Plattsburg.

I had never been from home before. The scenery along the Hudson, the visit to the capitol at Albany, the fashionable company at the Springs, the ride over to the lake, and the different scenery along its banks all was new and

beautiful, and intensely interesting. I found my company very agreeable. They had evidently not been informed of the cause of my banishment, but took me in their society to accommodate my father and to be a companion for their son.

Mr. Olcott had been in the same line of business with my father, but had retired with a competency. He usually took his family to some secluded summer resort, for he feared the influence of the more fashionable and popular places upon their morals and manners.

The place he had selected this year was delightfully situated in a deep cove of the lake, and looking across the lake upon the mountains of Vermont, and in the west upon the Adirondacks of New York.

The hotel where we stopped was the best in the place, and was the resort of a few families year by year. The proprietor did not aspire to keep pace with Ballston Springs or Cape May, but sought to make a quiet home for his guests. But his charges were large in proportion as the comforts abounded.

The fishing in the lake was excellent. There

were salmon there at that time, but I am told there are none now. Then a short distance up the Saranac river, which enters the lake at this point, there was excellent trout fishing. We were well provided with tackle, and had rare sport.

There were also deer in the neighborhood, and in the edge of the great Adirondack forest they were said to abound in great numbers.

Mr. Olcott, his son George and myself planned for a grand deer hunt. We took with us two famous guides, and with two teams and provisioning for a week we started for the mountains.

By night we arrived at a hovel, at a place since named Franklin, where we made our headquarters.

The guides stationed us at certain points on the lake, while they each, with four dogs chained to a yoke, which they wore over the shoulders, started out in opposite directions in search of game. We each had a light boat at our disposal with a lumberman to row us toward the deer, if any should be driven into the water.

It was not long before we heard the baying of the hounds which had been let loose upon a

scent. Now they seemed to be close at hand, and now again a great distance off. At length the sound came nearer. Suddenly I heard a crashing in the bushes near me, and behold there bounded forth a noble buck! His eyes glared, his tongue protruded and he breathed as if exhausted. He paused a moment in the attitude of listening, and then plunged into the water.

At first I was so startled that I did not know how to act. My boatman said, "Why don't you shoot. Now is your time."

I raised my gun to my shoulder and fired! I don't know what became of the deer, but I found myself full length upon the ground and bleeding profusely. The gun had bursted at the breech, and the pieces had been thrown back into my shoulder, and broken the collar bone, and lacerated the flesh terribly.

My boatman lifted me in the boat and quickly brought me to Mr. Olcott. He bound up my shoulder the best he could, and we made our way back to quarters.

They made me a comfortable bed in one of the wagons, and we drove homeward. The loss of blood and the jolting of the wagon over the

rough mountain roads reduced me very much, so that I was brought to the hotel in a very weak and dilapidated condition. My deer hunt was very expensive.

And yet every thing has its fair side.

Of course, I was obliged to remain in-doors.

Mr. Olcott and George found abundance to do to carry out their plans for daily amusement and recreation. But Mrs. Olcott was a very tender nurse, but I thought her little daughter a better nurse than herself.

Helen, (for that was her name,) was of fair complexion, light blue eyes, and rather under size for her age, she being, at this time, fourteen years old.

Every morning after my wounds had been dressed, and the room arranged, she would knock at the door and ask if she could read to me. And when she became tired of the reading she would take her work-basket and seat herself at the window looking over the lake and engage in sewing. Sometimes she would sing for me.

I did not tell her. But at that time she stole into my heart. Boy as I was, I felt the tenderness of love. It seemed to lift up my nature.

And I thought how nice it would be to be loved —and by such a sweet, pure girl! I who had known but little of a mother's love, and from whom my father had kept at such a dignified distance—I wanted some body to love me.

I said to her one day, "Helen, when we return to New York, I hope we 'll see a good deal of each other."

"I hope so," she said, "but you 'll be at New Haven, you know."

"Yes, that 's true: But won't you write to me."

"I will, if mother approves of it."

Her mother entered just then, and in her simple, artless manner, she said: "Mother, may I write to Henry when he returns to College."

The mother, for the moment, hesitated, and looking at her daughter, as if to assure herself that she was still her *little* girl, she said, "certainly, my dear, if Henry wishes it."

This was all that was said at the time. It was the beginning of—of—what shall I say? joys? Yes, many and delightful; sorrows? Yes, bitter, too bitter for such an one as she was.

I very nearly recovered from my accident by

the time appointed for our return to New York. My father had been apprized of it, and had written to me every week, and to Mr. Olcott, telling him to spare no expense for surgeons or for nursing.

Little did he know of who were my nurses, or of what had already came of it.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

WHICH INDICATES AN APPROACHING CRISIS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WRECKMASTER.

I ENTERED upon my Sophomore year at college with good resolutions. At the same time I felt disposed to congratulate myself that I had become so much of a man! Sixteen years old, at the head of my class, having learned to smoke, to drink champagne, to go to the theatre, to engage in a deer hunt and get wounded, *and to be in love!* Pretty well, I thought for a Freshman. I wondered what the Sophomore would become.

I resolved, however, that come what would, I would study hard. I really loved study. Besides, I was actuated by a natural ambition to excel. I always wanted to gratify my father, and nothing pleased him better than to know that I was following his example as a student.

But now I felt a little something way down in the bottom of my trembling heart which acted as an additional stimulus. I need not say it was the image of my dear little traveling companion and nurse at Plattsburgh. For her sake I would acquit myself well, and bear myself honorably, like a true-hearted man. And for the most part of this year I firmly maintained my high resolve.

Among the first to greet me as I walked across the common, and beneath the grand old elms which surround the college, was my jolly, fast friend, Shaw.

If possible, he was dressed even more fancifully than when we left him in New York. It was evident that he intended to make an impression upon some one, by his appearance, if he could not in any other way.

In his familiar way he took my arm and accompanied me to my room. After I had arranged my books and wardrobe, he proposed a walk. Together we strolled down to the water and along the shore, while he narrated to me his vacation experiences. He had not left the city at all, he said, but spent the most of his time at

the house in Barclay street, where he had introduced me. I felt flattered by his information that the gentleman to whom I had been introduced, had made repeated and particular inquiries about me, and I promised Shaw that I would go with him again when we should return to New York.

Shaw then asked me to narrate my adventures, which I did in all particulars, except the delicate little affair of Miss Olcott. For, to tell the truth, I felt a little suspicious and jealous of my friend. I feared that he might find her out and make her acquaintance, and being such a dashy, flashy, off-hand, free-and-easy sort of a fellow, he might make an impression there which would deprive me of my prize.

Yet, how often we lose when we endeavor to gain! I pulled out my handkerchief from my pocket and with it there came a letter. It was the first one I had received from her. And I was cherishing it by carrying it as close to my heart as possible.

Shaw picked it up and looked at the address, and cried out: "Halloo, Singleton! a letter from

a lady! Why you've got no mother nor sister. I suppose this must be from some cousin?"

I felt angry with him and demanded my letter. He felt disposed to tease me. So he went off a little distance and pretended to open and read it. I am certain he did not, but I afterwards found out that he did see the signature.

In those days letters were not placed in envelopes as now, and in folding up the sheet I had left her name on the outside.

He returned me the letter, saying, he could not resist the temptation to have a little fun. He patted me on the back, calling me a good fellow, and told me to "count him in" as one of the groomsmen at my wedding!

This instead of angering, so far elated me that I was upon the verge of telling him the whole story.

But Shaw was so full of his own important self, that he was never at ease unless he was talking about something which in some way reflected upon his own greatness.

"What do you think, Singleton," he said, "we have our class greeting to-night and I am the appointed orator."

I had forgotten this arrangement which was made at the close of the last term. I told him I should certainly be present.

"But, Singleton," he said, "I want you to do me a favor. You know the charm of all public addresses lies in the applause which is received. If you attend a meeting at the Tabernacle, you know that when there is 'a good hit' made by the orator, there is a tremendous amount of stamping and clapping. This stimulates the speaker, and besides it looks well in print to see in brackets the words 'applause,' 'great applause,' 'hear, hear,' 'sensation,' 'tremendous applause, during which the speaker retired.' Now, if you will do me this favor, you can command me for anything you please, and I will be at your service. You see, I know the ropes. I have found out at the Old Park Theatre, a certain number of men are employed whose business it is to take places in different parts of the house, and at certain points in the play to begin the clapping and stamping. I have not spoken to any one else, but if you will, at the close of my sentences, start the thing in

the hall to-night, you will place me under everlasting obligations, you know."

Well, I thought there could be no harm in it, although I began to feel disgusted at the intolerable vanity of the fellow. I told him I would do it.

But after all there was no necessity for any such arrangement. For it seemed that Shaw had been selected, because the boys knew he would make a fool of himself and that was just what they wanted.

Among Shaw's numerous weaknesses was a ridiculous amount of family pride. He was a *Shaw!* And although others did not know of any particular glory attaching to that name, yet he thought the sun rose and set with his family.

He had a family tree suspended in his room. And woe to the stranger who visited him! For he was compelled to follow him through the whole genealogical history. This one married a Johnson, and that one a Smith, and another a Brown. This one had so many children who settled in Pennsylvania, and that family were in Virginia, and had married among the Randolphs, who were descended from Pocahontas.

That one was a major in the British army, and had spent so many years in His Majesty's service in India. This one was a drummer-boy and was seriously wounded in the battle of Bunker Hill. And so he would go on, until one was tempted to say something more than "pshaw! pshaw!"

I had been through this crucible several times. And nearly all the class had the same cross to bear. So that when Shaw commenced his speech they were all prepared for a regular "break down" of applause.

He had put on his gloves. His hair was powdered and tied up in a cue. He had buff breeches clasped at the knee by a silver buckle, which at the same time held his tight-fitting black silk stockings.

He made a very profound bow to his audience which immediately broke out into prolonged applause. After they had ceased he bowed again, and this time after clearing his throat and throwing forward his arm, as he had seen Kemble do, on the stage, began.

"My name is not Norval, but Shaw. I did not feed my father's flocks upon the Grampian

hills, for none of my line were ever shepherds. I am sprung from a line of kings. I trace my ancestry back, back, back, through the centuries, to Richard, the lion-hearted, and his spirit has dwelt in all the race. (Tremendous applause.)

"There are other Shaws. There are among them, I doubt not, those of plebeian blood, who themselves are hewers of wood, and drawers of water, and whose ancestry like Gurth were the herders of swine in the forests of Britain. But, I have my tree which in all its branches indicates that the Shaws from whom I came, were blue-veined, and those of the slim hand and the long, flat foot." (Shaw had a remarkable foot which had often caused remark, so that this sentence was duly appreciated.) And again the house "came down" like thunder in token of full approbation.

He continued—

"There is in our town a Shaw who has gained considerable notoriety as a lawyer, judge, and member of Congress. But I disdain to hold any connection with him. For he, too, rose from obscurity, and even his honors can not offset his base blood. I am not his by any tie. I am not

even his neighbor, nor his neighbor's wife, (applause) nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, (applause) nor his ox, (applause) nor his ass, (tremendous applause, during which the speaker was very much moved) but I am Shaw of blood royal, removed for political considerations from the broad acres of my fathers to this land, *e pluribus unum.* United we stand, divided we fall." (Great applause.)

This was the introduction to his oration of welcome as they now entered upon the glorious career of Sophomores in Yale College. And it conveys a fair outline of his composition as a man.

You may be sure that fun-loving College boys did not permit such an exhibition to die with themselves.

One of the class lived at a little village a short distance from New Haven, and he proposed to some of his comrades to procure an invitation for Mr. Shaw to deliver an address there. The arrangement was heartily endorsed by them all, and it was not long before it was known to the whole college that Shaw had proved himself

such a superior orator that he was to be invited to speak at Ansonia.

In the course of two or three days he received a note as follows:

"MR. O. SHAW,—

"DEAR SIR: Having heard of your oration of welcome delivered before your class in college, on the evening of the 14th inst., and feeling that it is unjust to yourself and to the public, that the exhibition of such unusual powers should be limited to a single room and a single class in college, we the undersigned, representing the entire community of Ansonia, most respectfully request that you will favor us with an address upon any topic you may select, and at such time as may suit your convenience.

"An early answer is requested.

JOSEPH R. HAWLEY,
MAHLON BENEDICT,
EBENEZER HOTCHKISS.
} Trustees of Ansonia Academy.

"P. S. We especially request that the introduction to your speech in your class-room be repeated entire."

Shaw brought this invitation to me. I was already in the secret. I did not altogther like to see him make a fool of himself. And yet I thought it might do him good. Besides, I felt a little piqued because he looked at the letter from my New York favorite.

When he asked my opinion, I said, "Go, certainly. It may be the making of you. Once establish a reputation in this classic vicinity for oratory and your fortune is made. On the flood tide of popularity, who knows? you may proudly float into the congressional halls at Washington, and perchance into the Presidential chair."

If anything was required to be added to the laudations already received by the students for his first effort, and the invitation he had received from the Trustees of an Academy to appear in public in their village, to burst this bubble of vanity, it was just such a speech as I made to him.

He put his cockade on his head in a jaunty way, thrust his thumbs into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, threw his head back, and for some minutes strode up and down the room. A peacock with comb and ruffle, head and tail!

When he stopped, he said, "Singleton, I never thought it would come to this so soon. I knew I had it in me and that at some day it would come out. But while in the Sophomore class, to overtop Juniors and Seniors, and to be

complimented by a whole village besides, for the greatest of all powers, oratory, why it is a surprise to myself! I tell you what, old fellow, I owe you one, and you may bet that I'll pay you with interest. It was you, my jolly old cove, (taking my hand and slapping me upon the shoulder,) it was you that helped to do it. It was the applause which you started in the hall. Count upon me old fellow for any service hereafter. But I owe a good deal of it, too, to my theatrical training. Didn't you recognize a good deal of Kemble in me that night? especially when I was seeking to give expression to my indignation at the very thought of being supposed to be related to that common lawyer, Shaw, of New York. Don't you recall the glare of the eye, the grinding of the teeth, the frantic forward motion of the body, and the clenched fist, combining with a fiery intonation of the voice? I got all that from Kemble. And now Singleton, I like you. Take a little advice my boy. Go to the theatre. Go often. Get imbued with the mode of speech and action which you see there. And then, even though you may not possess as great natural gifts as I do, still,

you will make your mark. Take my advice and *be a man.*"

I did not relish this patronizing air very much. It had the effect to make me all the more anxious that he should make the speech in the village.

The time was set for Friday evening of the same week. The announcement was made in the paper, and posted up on the college bulletin.

When the hour arrived, the large room in the Ansonia Academy was crowded to suffocation.

Shaw was dressed to the very extreme of the mode. And when he came upon the platform, he was heartily welcomed with applause by feet and hands and cat-calls of every description.

I noticed a gawky looking young man with tow head, and hair standing on end, seated just in front of me. From his remarks to those within hearing, and from theirs to him, I judged him to be a singular character in the neighborhood. He placed his chin between his two broad, red hands, with elbows resting upon the back of the seat in front of him. He was very much interested, and when Shaw got into his introduction and began to warm up with indig-

nation, referring to Shaw the lawyer, saying, "I am not his by any tie whatever. I am not even his neighbor, nor his neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his *ox*, nor his ASS"—the country clown cried out, "WHOSE ASS ARE YOU THEN?"

Shaw came to a dead stop. The crowd swayed too and fro with convulsive laughter. Over and over again they shouted and screamed. It was impossible to get silence. And when at length there came a lull, Shaw was gone!

I felt both glad and sorry—glad that such a bag of wind had been pricked, and that such contemptible pride of family in this republican country had been humbled, but sorry because he had counted upon me as a friend, for I really liked the fellow. His fault seemed to be weakness rather than vice.

But I was mistaken in even this extent of charity.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

SHOWING HOW SHAW'S DISCOMFITURE AFFECTED THE WRECKMASTER'S FORTUNES.

THE affair at Ansonia was fun to the college boys, but death to Shaw 's pride. It seemed to dawn upon his mind that the fellows were making game of him.

Without consulting with any of the College authorities, or writing to his parents, he packed up his books and wardrobe, and left New Haven the next day for New York. He stopped at my room and handed his card saying, "Good-bye, Harry. Here is my address. Come and see me in New York. This place is too much for me."

Poor Shaw! How I pitied him. His lesson had come early, but it was severe. If it would only take from him that contemptible vanity and intolerable self-conceit! But it did not.

He only transferred it from one field of operations to another.

I had occasion about a month afterward to visit my home. I found my father sick and in trouble. His trouble had no doubt produced his sickness. He was in danger of failing in business, and it only required two or three days to determine whether or not he was sound in his business relations. The excitement incident to his apparently failing fortunes, had kept him from sleep and from his favorite studies, and had produced an aggravated form of dyspepsia. And this had its usual effect of greatly depressing his spirits. It even affected his religious hopes.

It was sad to see him such a wreck. His hair had turned prematurely gray, and his face was haggard.

He threw his arms around my neck and cried, "O Henry, my boy, my poor child, my son, my only son!" It was like David's lamentation over Absalom.

My father's despair was respecting myself. He thought he saw himself shorn of his large wealth, and his anxiety was chiefly for me. He

seemed to see me already a wandering beggar. Alas! if that had been all, I would, to-day, have reason to thank God.

The crash came as he anticipated. My father was bankrupt. With a high sense of honor, which was his pride, he delivered up all his assets to meet the claims of his creditors.

With a generosity not usual, they exempted from attachment his large and valuable library, the family portraits, and enough furniture to supply a moderate sized house.

My grandfather had bequeathed to me two houses and lots on Broadway, a little above Chambers street. My father had the management of this property, and into one of these houses we removed. The rent of the other was a partial support for us, and my father became a book-keeper in the establishment of which he was previously the honored head.

With cast down look, he daily went to and from his office. The firm pitied him, and dealt with him very indulgently. So that he retained the old negro, and little Hernando with two of the female domestics, which had always lived in the family.

Of course, his horses, carriages and all luxuries of this sort were disposed of for the benefit of his creditors.

His only brother, with whom and my father there had not existed a very friendly feeling for a number of years, now came forward and craved the favor of being responsible for the expenses of my education. My father reluctantly accepted the proposition, although for anything else than for the object contemplated, he would have spurned any assistance.

During the excitement incident to this great change in our circumstances, I was very much broken down. My pride was wounded. My spirits sympathized with those of my dejected father, and I felt more alone than ever.

I resorted to various expedients to drive away the blues. I tried to be a man, and at first took the place of adviser to my father. I pictured to him the deeper misery of the thousands around us in the great city. I told him of other instances where merchants had lost, and in a few years recovered their fortunes. I spoke of the luxury of his library, of his freedom from

responsibility in business, of his faithful servants, and of my resolution to acquit myself well.

He listened to me with a smile upon his lips, and then moaned out, "Poor boy!" He stroked my head and said, "I did not know your value until now. My poor Henry."

But it did no good. He sat by the hour, his eyes fixed upon the fire in the grate. He would answer a question with the fewest possible words, and without a change of countenance. If visitors called, he would receive them without rising from his chair. His "good morning" or "good-bye" were uttered mechanically, and there was no invitation to come again.

I went to the theatre. For in his condition, at that time, my father paid no attention to my movements.

This was my second visit to the Park Theatre. This time it was to direct my thoughts from my great burden of troubles. I hardly looked around. My interest was all enlisted by the play. It was the very same I had witnessed at my former visit. As it approached the scene of the murder of Desdemona by the Moor, I could not help but recall my conduct at that time.

I blushed to think of my verdancy. And, then, for the first time, I looked around. I felt faint, and came near sinking down in my seat—for looking me straight in the face was Shaw, and beside him was ——, could it be? I looked again. She was looking in another direction. Evidently she had not seen me. Yes, it was my little beauty, my first, best love—my nurse at Plattsburgh and my correspondent!

I quickly regained my composure as best I could. That this should occur just then, in the midst of a tragic scene portraying the maddening passion of jealousy, and then, too, when I had enough beside to crush my spirit. O, it was too much! I could not endure it.

I hastened from the theatre, and entered the first bar-room I saw. I called for brandy. I then took a cigar, and sat down. Again I called for liquor, and drank. I repeated it, until I was in a condition of beastly intoxication.

In the morning I found myself in a little upper room of the same tavern, my coat and vest, and watch and money all gone! Stolen!

I sat down upon the side of the cot, and cried like a child. I in that plight! I, the son of

Richard Singleton, a man noted for his high moral character, as well as for his honor and family position! *I* in the position of a common drunkard! Yes, so it was. Thank God, shame had not forsaken me.

I went to the landlord and plead with him to lend me some money to procure a coat, so that I might get home without attracting attention. But he would not do it. I told him who I was. He only laughed and said, "He guessed old Singleton could n't hold his head so high any longer, since them money bags had toppled over." I then asked him to lend me a coat of his own. Even this he refused. I then became angry, and told him that if he did not do either the one or the other within five minutes' time, I would have him arrested for robbery. When he saw my determination, he gave me an old blue coat out at the elbows, with two brass buttons on one side, and a faded velvet collar. He said I might have that, if I would return it that evening. I promised to do so.

And a sorrier looking figure, as I buttoned up that coat, and drew my hat over my eyes, I thought I never saw. But the climax was not

yet reached. It was about noon. I had not gone a block before I came plump up against—*Shaw!*

"Why—why! Singleton, what does this mean?" he said, walking around me and gazing at my coat.

I hurried on without noticing him. He ran after me and laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said, "Hold on, my boy. I understand it all. You can't go home in that plight, you know."

I didn't utter a word, but drew back my fist and struck at him, uttering a horrible oath—*my first oath.* May God in his mercy forgive me!

Shaw parried the blow, and said, "Hold on, Singleton, are you mad? Come with me."

By this time my reason had returned, and together we turned into a side street, and then he proposed, without asking any further questions, that I go and get a coat and vest as near like those that were stolen as possible.

I declined going until he should explain the circumstance of the previous evening, how it was that he was at the theatre with Miss Olcott.

"Why easy enough, my poor fellow, easy enough!" he replied.

"Why, you see, when I picked up a letter of yours on a certain occasion in New Haven, I happened to see the signature and the address. Well, when I came home, I happened to ask my sister Nell if she knew this young lady, your friend, you know, and she did! Well, I said, 'Nell, the next time you go there, I want to accompany you, I have particular reasons for wishing to see her.' And yesterday was the day we called. Upon my word, Harry, it was the first time I ever saw her. My sister has a young fellow gallanting her about, and she happened to say to your friend, you know, that we were going to Old Park last night, that is herself and her friend and myself, that is this identical person, Shaw, now standing before you, (reversing his finger and pointing at himself,) and asked if we should stop for her with the carriage, if she would not form one of our company. She accepted the invitation, and, of course, Nell had somebody to care for her, and I had to be the gallant for our, that is, your particular friend.

That's all of it. But, Singleton, she is a very nice girl."

I asked if she saw me at the theatre?

He said she did not, but that after I had left, he told her that he saw me there. She was very much surprised that you did not stop and speak with her.

"I imagined the reason immediately," said Shaw; "and I find by the neat blow you tried to plant between my peepers, that I was correct. I knew I could not explain then, and so I made no sign of recognition, you know, and I did not want a scene just then, for Othello was crowning his jealousy by that pocket-handkerchief over Desdemona's mouth."

Shaw laughed immoderately at this happy turn of his explanation.

I felt more comfortable, and shook hands with him, asking his pardon, both for my hasty judgment of him, and for attempting to strike him.

I then explained how I got into such a scrape. He loaned me sufficient money to procure a coat and vest, after which we separated, and I went home.

My father had just arrived from his office.

He made no inquiry about my whereabouts the previous evening. I must have shown the effects of my dissipation, for he looked me in the face, and again stroked my head and went over the usual phrases, "My boy, my poor, poor Henry, what will become of him!"

I feared that reason was being dethroned, and mentioned it to his old servant, and directed him to keep a close watch upon his actions. For I suspected he might, in a fit of great despair, destroy himself.

Late in the afternoon I received a note written in a feminine hand. I recognized it, and, trembling with anxiety, tore it open and read:

"DEAR HENRY:—Come to tea with us this evening. Papa and mamma both directed me to invite you. As ever your true friend,

HELEN OLCOTT."

I had been from college and in the city nearly two months, and had not written a word to my little friend, nor called upon her. I imagined that our change of circumstances would make her family indifferent to me.

Of course, I went. I went early, and I staid late. O, they were hours of bliss, of sweet,

innocent bliss. If it were possible, how I would like to turn the dial of time backward to that very day, and begin life over again. But it must not, can not be. The past is beyond recall. O, young men, how solemnly that truth falls upon my ears now—"*The past is beyond recall.*"

Helen told me that her father had informed the family of the misfortunes which had befallen us, and also of my father's honorable conduct in settling with his creditors. They all felt very sorry for us, and wished to continue the intimacy, but her father had been so coldly received by my father upon the occasion of their last meeting, that he was obliged to keep at a distance.

It was evident that they did not understand my father's mental condition. I, therefore, took pains to explain it to them while at tea. Mr. Olcott said he could now understand his manner, both toward himself and others. He said he should continue to call upon him, in the hope that he might comfort him somewhat.

I thanked him, and expressed the desire that he would do so. He rejoined that I must make

free to come to his house whenever I had an opportunity, and not to let a false pride stand in the way of our previous intimacy.

This delighted me, and I returned home with a lighter heart than I had held for many weeks. I felt that I had some true friends, and one who was more than a friend.

CHAPTER THE NINTH.

WHICH THROWS THE WRECKMASTER UPON HIS OWN RESOURCES.

IN the course of a few days, I returned to college. I was in arrears in my studies, and consequently I was obliged to work very hard.

I soon went over the ground my class had traversed during my absence, and regained my former position of number one. I held it until the close of the collegiate year. I took the two prizes, one for classics and one for oratory, and again returned to my home.

I did not then think that I should never rest my eyes upon the walls of old Yale again. But so it was.

I found my father much worse than I expected. He had for some time ceased to correspond with me, and that office had devolved upon

Pierre; and he, from a kind desire not to worry me, had put every thing in as favorable a light as possible.

Father had been obliged to give up his situation; but the firm had continued his salary.

Yet the thought of being considered an object of pity and charity had pressed heavily upon his mind. He was very weak.

He recognized me, and only said, "My poor Henry!" and then wept unceasingly, until I wondered where he found so many tears.

The physician told me that his ability and desire to weep was the most hopeful symptom in his case, and then, when the tears should stop flowing, would occur the crisis in his disease; and from that point we might anticipate either entire recovery or hopeless insanity.

The crisis soon arrived, but, alas! it took the unfavorable turn. He stared wildly about the room, called loudly upon the name of his wife, cursed and swore most horrible oaths, and with the carving-knife made an attempt upon my life.

Fortunately Pierre prevented any harm being done. This entire reversion of mind and affec-

tions was the surest indication of hopeless insanity. For the pious to become profane, and to turn upon the dearest object of love with violence, is a common symptom with the confirmed lunatic.

No alternative remained for us but to remove him to the Asylum. There he had the very best of nursing and medical attention. But it was only for a brief period. Fortunately (I say fortunately—for who would not rather see a loved one dead than a hopeless lunatic?) he lived but a few weeks.

We buried him in the family vault beneath the Old North Church in Fulton street, where we hope he will remain until the resurrection morning; but we fear the ruthless hand of progress—that despoiler of the tomb—will, ere long, unearth those dear remains.

I was now alone—an orphan, without father or mother, and also without brother or sister. It requires that one should experience the sensation of loneliness thus produced in order to understand it.

The vacated home! Home after a funeral! O, what feelings creep over the soul! The ex-

citement of the sickness and the services has passed away. The coming and going of sympathizing friends have ceased. Even the doctor's gig no longer draws up to the door. A terrible reaction takes place. Who has not felt it?

I walked through the deserted rooms. I looked at the bed where my father slept. I sat in his chair in his retired library. When the bell announced supper, I went down alone, and took my place. Although I had done this for some time past, yet it was with a vague hope I should again see my father there.

The darkness of evening came down upon the earth, which increased my sense of loneliness. It was painful beyond endurance. I tried to read, but could not. I even went to the piano, but the first note I struck seemed like a rebuke for irreverence for the memory of the dead. I went to the kitchen, and tried to divert myself by conversation with the servants; but they immediately began crying in a loud, wild wail, which only harrowed up my feelings the more.

What should I do? I put on my hat and took a stroll down Broadway. I did not know where my steps were tending. But, as if fate led me

on, I found my hand upon the door-bell of the gambling house in Barclay street.

"A strange freak," you may say. Well, it was. I blame myself that I did it, and still I yet pity my own forlorn condition, and seek to cover the fault with a mantle of charity.

I sent up my card for Shaw, who I knew made that place his nightly haunt. He happened to be in, and I was summoned to meet him at the table in the dining parlor.

I need not particularize the proceedings of that evening. Let it suffice that I ate, and drank, and gambled! I drank to drown my feelings of sorrow, and then I drank to drown remorse. I threw myself into all the excitement of the place like one beside himself.

I do not name my extreme sense of loneliness as an excuse for such excesses, and at such a time, but only as the cause or occasion of them.

When I came to myself the next day, and recalled the scenes of the day past, I suffered all the horrors of the lost. And as I look back upon myself, then only eighteen years of age, and already so steeped in the vice of drunkenness. it is with unutterable pangs of remorse.

Surely this was no way to mitigate grief. Had I not been taught the comforting truths of the gospel? Had I not learned that only from a Divine Source and through prayer can that sympathy be obtained which the soul in its emergencies so greatly needs? Ah, yes! I had learned it; but it was only a matter of the intellect. I did not believe it, and consequently did not feel it nor apply for it. I have since learned, young gentlemen, that there is nothing like religion upon which to lean for support, or to which to trust for guidance.

Mr. Olcott had called on his way down to his office that morning, but Pierre mercifully excused me from seeing him by saying that I was ill. Mr. Olcott promised to call on his way home that evening.

In the meantime, Pierre gave me some counsel. He said he "S'posed it was none o' his business, but he had a weighty load on his mind, which he must git off. Now, Mister Henry, you know I'se been with your father nigh on to twenty year. I loved him, Mister Henry, jist as much as you. He bought me

and Riah in Cuba, and he treated us like as his own folks. When Riah died, he buried her jist as nice as if she was white folks. Now, Mister Henry, he is gone, and what is to become of you? I tell you—I tell you—if you don't stop dat 'are rum, you 'll go to de bad one *fast.*" And he burst into tears and left the room.

It was, no doubt, a great effort for him to talk to me in this manner. He expected that I would be offended; but at the time I weighed his words, and resolved to regard his warning. How often since then, when I have seen young men tampering with drink, have his words come back to me: "I tell you—I tell you—if you don't stop dat 'are rum, you 'll go to de bad one *fast.*"

Mr. Olcott called and invited me to tea at his house. I hesitated at first, not wishing to carry my gloom into his cheerful family circle. After much persuasion, however, I consented. It was for a twofold object that he had invited me; one to assuage my sorrow, and the other to talk over plans for the future.

I had not arrived at any conclusion what to do. I expected my bachelor uncle, who had

aided in my last year's education, to come and counsel with me, which he did a day or two afterward.

Mr. Olcott, however, proposed that I should break up our home and live at his house, he agreeing to take Pierre and little Hernando into his service. I agreed to this conditionally that my uncle did not present something better—that is, something which would not make me a sort of dependent upon his family; and also that, if circumstances should ever warrant it, little Hernando should be my own servant. To this he consented, at the same time saying that his offer of a home was no charity, but would be a favor to them, inasmuch as they desired my society.

Of course I felt flattered and pleased by this proposition. My uncle approved it, and only insisted that I should make full compensation for board. This was a matter too delicate to broach, but he said he would do it; and he did, and constituted himself paymaster.

I now was my own master. My property was sufficient to keep me in comfort. I was under no obligation and no restraint. A sense

of respectability, however, prompted me to seek some business. I applied to my father's old firm. I told them that I desired something to do, but did not care so much for the salary as for a little more leisure than is usually allowed to clerks. They took me into their employ, and placed me at my father's desk, and allowed me the same privilege of hours that he had. At two o'clock each day my work was done.

I bought a horse and wagon, and for a time followed my father's old habit of taking a drive every afternoon. But I improved upon his practice by stopping at the hotels on the route. In this way I made many acquaintances, generally a free and easy sort of men, who never counted the dollars they expended, and who were "hail fellows well met" with every one.

This tallied so well with my disposition that I liked nothing so well as a drive to Snedicor's, a round of drinks, a few jolly stories, and a good Havana cigar.

All this seemed innocent enough. No one reproached me for it. At home every thing was pleasant. And so a year or more glided on.

It must not be supposed that I lived in the

same house with Helen all this time to no purpose. Our fondness for each other increased. It must have been observed by her parents, but they interposed no check. We already had a tacit understanding with each other. Things were to continue as they were until I should attain to my majority, and then I was formally to ask her hand of her parents.

In this way another year and a half sped along, interrupted by a single adventure, which came near dashing all my hopes.

I could not get rid of the fact that I was not really an orphan, but that I had a mother still living somewhere. It preyed upon my mind. It worried me. I thought that she might have repented of her rash act, and that the maternal instinct might have regained the ascendancy.

With these thoughts, I determined, if possible, to find her and see her. I looked over the directories for the name of Mr. ——, the villain who had led her astray, and could only ascertain that he had not lived in the city for about five years—that was about the time of the elopement. I inferred that he had left the city as a place of residence, or had changed his name, or else had

refused to have it in the directory. I assumed that he was still in the city, and began my search accordingly.

By inquiry of old merchants, I ascertained that the house with which he was associated was still engaged in trade, but that he had withdrawn with a competency many years since.

Immediately after finishing my work for the day, I went to the office of Hartwick, Van Wyck & Co., shipping merchants in South street. As I came up to the railing, one of the clerks turned about and said:

"By Jove! there's Singleton;" and came forward and shook me heartily by the hand. I did not recognize him at first, his beard and long hair had so changed his appearance.

"Don't you know me?" he said. "Don't you remember the smoking bout and the Amphictyonic Council?"

I instantly withdrew my hand, and informed him that that transaction had for ever closed all avenues of intimacy or acquaintanceship between us.

A gentleman was sitting by the window reading a newspaper. I told him that I was in

search of a Mr. ——, a former member of this firm. The man turned very pale, and then in an undertone told me that Mr. —— had removed with his family to Havre, France, and that any communication I might address to him there would reach him.

I touched my hat and withdrew. I had reached the corner of the street when I felt a gentle touch upon my shoulder, and turning about, met the eye of my former college acquaintance whom I had just "snubbed" in the office.

"See here, Singleton," said he, "you treated me very cavalierly just now, and in the presence of others, too. I'm a junior partner in that house, and am not disposed to let the matter pass over so easily. And I have run after you to have matters set right."

I said that it remained with him entirely. The offence in college was of so gross a character that he could not expect to be forgiven so readily.

"O pshaw!" he rejoined. "Now, Singleton, you know they are only college tricks, and have the sanction of long usage. It does not follow that there need be any personal feeling existing

between the actors in any such transaction. If it will be any comfort to you, let me tell you that when I was a Freshman I was treated by the same Council much worse than you were, for I was actually tarred and feathered, a process which was called 'the sacred unction.' Now I assure you that I have nothing but the kindest feelings toward you."

With this he extended his hand. I could not find it in my heart to refuse him. "Let us be friends," he said. "Agreed," I replied; and we two walked arm in arm toward Broadway.

After we had gone a short distance, Brown (for this was his name) said: "After all, Singleton, was it not the allusion I made to your mother's elopement that chiefly offended you while we were in college?"

"No," I replied, "since I never heard you make such an allusion."

"Well, I thought you had. I might as well confess, then, that it was I who told the matter to the fellows there, and when the Sophomore chided you about it, it was done at my instigation, on purpose that you might assail him, and

that so we might have a fit subject for trial before the Amphictyonic Council."

This angered me considerably, but at the same time it explained the course of the offensive Sophomore, who, as I have said, when he was struck did not return the blow.

Brown confessed that this was small business on his part, but that it was prompted by no malice, but only from a spirit of fun—to have a trial.

This explanation also disarmed me as against the Sophomore, for whom I had vowed a summary chastisement the first time we met, and raised Brown in my estimation considerably, inasmuch as he took the whole blame to himself.

A suspicion shot across my mind that he might know something more about the affair. So I asked him how he knew of the matter at the time of its occurrence.

"Ha! ha! my boy," he replied, "now you are coming to it. Certainly I knew all about it, and know how matters stand to-day."

You may imagine my feelings. I trembled all over. My mother! O, it thrilled me! It may be she loves me yet!

CHAPTER THE TENTH.

UNVEILS A MYSTERY AND SEVERAL OTHER THINGS.

GRASPING Brown tightly by the arm, I said:

"Now tell me all about it. Is my mother living? Where is she? Can I see her? Have you seen her? Does she live with Mr. ——? Is she married to him?" and I do not know how many more questions, all in a breath.

"Be quiet, Singleton," he said, "and I will tell you all. But I do it at my peril. I'm afraid I'm being watched at this very moment. And should it be known that I had given you the information I am now about to give, it would ruin my prospects for life. But I can't help it. It has preyed upon my mind for a long time, and I am determined to relieve myself. Let us

go somewhere where we can be entirely by ourselves."

With that he led me to the Merchant's Hotel, and in the corner of the little reading-room we sat down, and at much greater length than I shall give it, he told the story of this sad portion of my life.

"Mr. —— is my mother's brother. He lost his wife by death in giving birth to a child—a daughter, who is now living in this city, and who herself has a son, a boy about four years of age. His life has been of an exceedingly quiet character. But I am convinced that he is a sly rascal. He was a member, and among the most active members of Dr. Fraley's church. No one gave the responses in the prayers in a louder tone of voice than did he. No one was more active in the management of the financial affairs. He was for a long time the steward. He was the Judas that carried the bag. An investigation of his accounts revealed the fact that there was a deficiency to a large amount. To prevent scandal, he was quietly deposed from office and excommunicated. This gives you one phase of his character.

"I have the means of knowing that his frequent visits to your house were under the guise of religion, in order to extend sympathy to one whom he said 'was greatly persecuted.' He admitted that her sufferings were rather of a passive than an active character, but that she was lonely, she had no one to talk to, she had no one to cherish and indulge her; her nature craved sympathy, but her husband was cold and formal, giving her every thing she could wish except society, and that she needed."

I felt that all this was true, and it had the effect to make me more anxious than ever to see my mother. Brown continued:

"At the time of the elopement your mother boarded in a retired place in Westchester county, until your father sued for a divorce, which she permitted to be granted without opposition. Then the parties married. I verily believe that the sin was only in the desertion and the subsequent marriage; for from what I have seen of your mother, her principles appear to be established, and she has a perfect horror of a vicious life."

Nothing that I had heard during all the time

of the separation caused me so much relief as this information. I seized Brown in my arms and embraced him, called him my dearest friend, and wept for very joy. He continued:

"They made a trip to Havre, where our house has a branch establishment, and she did not learn of your father's misfortune and death until her return. I happened to be present when she heard the news. It was a heart-rending scene. She paced the floor and screamed hysterically. She tore her hair, and for a time I feared she would lose her mind.

"A physician was called, who, by administering anodynes, composed her to sleep; but the servant told me that every time she aroused she would cry: 'My husband! give me back my husband!' And when, the next morning, she had recovered herself, she said to Mr. ——, 'I have now but one purpose in life; it is to live for my son.'

"Then the brutality of my uncle exhibited itself more than ever. For you must remember that he knew of your father's failure in business, and had a hand in bringing it about; and he knew also of his death while they were in Havre,

but he took good care not to let her know it. But now that he had discovered that his wife still cherished affection for you, he determined either that this should be crushed or that you should die. He did not say so, but his conduct since then, which was only about four weeks ago, has clearly proved it to my mind. And this explains this voluntary statement at this time, at the risk, as I said, of having all my worldly prospects blighted. For he is the most powerful member of our firm, although but a silent partner. And I tell you this to put you upon your guard.

"Your mother has been a prisoner at the house where she is boarding. There are no other boarders. The woman that keeps the house is in the secret, as is also the maid that attends her, and the man that waits upon the door. They are all bribed on no account to permit her to go out unless under Mr. ——'s special escort, and to permit no one to see her under any plea whatever. This diabolical spirit in the man is rendering her life miserable. She is a beautiful woman, and although not old, her hair is rapidly turning white.

"I have seen the man-servant, and he has told me that she has several times given him money to search you out. He has tried, but, so far, failed. So when I saw you come into the office this morning, I felt that it was a perfect God-send; and my only hope of not being suspected of communicating with you is in the fact that my uncle thinks me under every obligation to him. And I do not know, after all, but that your brusque treatment of me in his presence, may also have the effect to disarm suspicion.

"I have now, in a few words, told you all. In regard to the property which he was instrumental in robbing from your father, I would advise you to take no notice. You could not recover, and a failure would be worse than to have made no effort. But in regard to your mother, something ought to be done. I do not know what to advise. I think I can get a communication from you to her, and from her to you again, through the doorkeeper. But it will be a risk. Yet, Singleton, you may command me as you please to restore your mother to you. I will risk every thing to effect it."

This proffer of self-sacrifice I could hardly understand, and told him so.

He replied that his soul had been consuming with remorse the last month that he should know of these schemes and I should not, and that this poor woman should be deprived of the comfort of seeing the only object of her love. "For you must know that after your mother discovered the duplicity of her new husband, she despised him, and this has made him hate her with tenfold fury.

"This is all I have to say to you. Now take my arm, and we will take a walk."

We strolled up to Chatham street, then through the Bowery, and across some open lots near to the residence of Colonel Rutgers.

"There," he said, "the middle one of that block of three houses is your mother's prison."

I felt all my early love revive. I wanted to run and throw myself into her arms. I wanted to strike a blow and set her free from that horrible man.

But Brown held me back. "It is necessary," he said, "to move with caution. You write a note informing her that you know where she is,

and that it is your desire to see her, and so on—you know what else to write, and hand it to me."

We walked back to the hotel, and I wrote my mother a letter—a long letter, such as any loving son would address to his mother. I made no allusion to the past, except to say that I was a poor orphan, and she was a childless mother, and then appealed to her to come and live with me.

You will see the difficulty surrounding her. She was this man's wife. She hated him. He persecuted her. Yet she had no right to leave him; and she could not if she would.

Brown took my letter, but it was several days before we met, as by agreement, at the same place in the same hotel.

In the meantime, what do you think? I had not been home. I had not been to the store, but I had become intoxicated, and remained in this state for four days! My clothes were filthy, my face unshaven; I was haggard, and my money all gone. I had been twice turned out of the hotel when I went to meet Brown at the time of day appointed. I had literally slept in

the streets. I had once gone to the gambling place on Barclay street, and the doorkeeper refused me admittance. And it was only when I could get no more liquor that I began to be sobered. When I came to myself, so deep was my shame and mortification that I actually went to the pier with the purpose of committing suicide! And there I was arrested by a Providence almost as remarkable as was the poet Cowper, who was on his way to destroy his life, when something intervened, and he returned and penned those immortal lines:

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm."

The river was lashed into fury. A wind had arisen and gone forth as precursor to a terrible storm that was rising in the north-west. The waves were dark, overshadowed by the terrific black cloud that was rising, and the white caps which crested them seemed to be hissing in anger. They rose to the level of the pier where I was standing, and the spray flew into my face. The sea-gulls were making circuits far up into

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the sky, and then down to the very water itself, in their efforts to prevent themselves from being driven away by the blast. The vessels were all in bare poles, except here and there one which was trying, under the smallest amount of canvas, to make some cove on the Jersey shore before the storm should reach its climax. The wind had already carried my hat into the water. I had divested myself of my coat, and had filled my pockets with large-sized pebbles, to aid me in sinking to the bottom of the river. But I looked up the stream and saw the march of that terrible cloud, its edge marked by a silver lining by the sun, which had not yet been entirely darkened. The clouds were marching and countermarching, like the serried hosts of an army. Bank upon bank were they piled. They were of different shades, the smoke-like mist rushing across the Egyptian blackness of the background, while the lightning seemed the messenger darting across, up and down, and crosswise and zigzag, now of a deep red color, now of a bright golden hue, and now of the richest purple, with a fringe of all the other colors of the rainbow; while occasionally a great

gap would open, and reveal a vast lake of fire and brimstone, which was followed by deep and prolonged rolling bursts of thunder.

I was awe-struck at the scene. And there I stood, looking, gazing, lost in wonder, with my coat on my arm, prepared to leap into the water, when I was blinded by a stroke of the lightning, followed immediately by a terrific clap of thunder. As soon as I could see, I beheld a vessel, anchored about a hundred yards before me, on fire, and literally shivered to pieces, and a number of men struggling in the water!

I ran to the nearest boat, jumped in, and through the waves, and with the frenzy of a madman, pulled for their rescue. I succeeded in saving the whole of them.

Thus was I delivered from suicide, and was made the means of saving a number of my fellow men from death.

The captain asked my name, which I refused to give. They all thrust money in my hand, which I took for the purpose of purchasing clothes. I left them, and as I went I continued repeating the lines of Cowper, thinking, at the same time, of the circumstances so similar,

in my own case, to those which had called them forth.

"Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill,
He treasures up his bright designs,
And works his sovereign will.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

I was deeply impressed by the circumstances of my deliverance; and these words, in connection with the arresting providence, made me to reflect whether I did not require the assistance and guidance of a higher Power and a higher Wisdom. My religion, thus far, had been only an intellectual reception of the truth; and now I had come the nearest to having it experimentally, as a part of my consciousness, than ever before. O, if I had only followed up the impressions! If I had then and there besought

the God of mercy to unite me to himself by a living faith!

But, alas! it was only the morning dew; it soon vanished, and I became the same as ever.

I framed the best excuse I could to the family of Mr. Olcott, and then taking him aside, told him the story of my mother which Brown had given to me. All had noticed my haggard appearance; and when I told Mr. Olcott that I had been waiting and watching night and day, he seemed satisfied, and also satisfied his wife and Helen too.

I gave the same excuse to the head of our house, and he explained to the others, so that I was reinstated both in the family and the office without difficulty.

Brown had succeeded in getting my letter to my mother, and also a reply from her, and had been every day, as he promised, to the hotel to meet me, but I was not there. He had called at the office, but they could give him no information of my whereabouts. He had also called at Mr. Olcott's with a like result. At length we met, and so began a new series of incidents.

You will observe that although I drank every

day on the road or in the club-house, that this did not affect me. But as soon as any unusual excitement seized me, then my recourse was drink, until the senses were entirely benumbed. I had not yet awoke to the reality that I was so thoroughly a slave to the passion.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

PORTRAYS THE WRECKMASTER'S ATTEMPT AT THE RESCUE OF HIS MOTHER.

MY mother's letter, which Brown succeeded in bringing to me, aroused strong and mingled emotions within my breast. There was love, and grief, and the intensest indignation. My tears were the expression of a long pent-up affection, while from my eye, I doubt not, there also darted forth a demon of revenge. To know a mother's love, to avenge outraged honor, to rescue her from the clutches of a villain worse than a murderer, all this, at one and the same time, racked me until my frame quivered with the excitement, and my face became pale and haggard.

I remembered that there had been days of chivalry, when men buckled on their armor and rode forth, exposing themselves to all kinds of danger and hardship, to right some terrible wrong, to protect virtue, and to mete out to vice a summary and terrible punishment.

But what was this compared with my position? Here was a great reality. Here was my mother in perpetual bondage, a slave in the most abject condition, a wife by law, but yet an unwilling prisoner—the object of my dearest natural affection almost within sight from my windows, and yet we were not permitted the little boon of even seeing each other.

My determination was made. I told Brown of it. He said that at this stage he must withdraw. At the same time he pressed my hand and bade me "God speed." I wrote a note in pencil, which Brown promised to get into my mother's possession, and we parted.

I had already kept Pierre informed of all that had transpired. I now told him my purpose, and together we adopted our plan for the rescue of my mother.

According to my directions in the note to her,

she was to hold herself in readiness to leave her prison on the evening of Thursday. It was now Monday. Mr. —— was to be decoyed away from his home by a letter, which Brown had suggested, and which promised to furnish important intelligence respecting some business project upon which he had entered.

Pierre and Hernando, who was then about eleven years of age, were to accompany me in a close carriage to a certain locality near to the scene of the proposed rescue.

The region about where the three houses stood was, for the most part, open lots. Streets were cut through, but they were not paved, and the grading had left in some places upright bluffs, and in others deep cavities which, during the winter season, were filled with water.

There was one of these cavities immediately in the rear of the house in which my mother was confined. The water was about four feet deep. From the bottom of this a stone wall had been built up to the level of the yard connected with her house, and upon this wall there was a board fence about twelve feet high, all along the top of which were sharp iron spikes.

It was over this fence and through this gully, filled with water, that I must bring my mother, if I should succeed in rescuing her.

It was a dark night. We drove the carriage behind one of the bluffs, not far distant. Hernando was left to care for the horses. I had secured a room nearly opposite to Mr. Olcott's, where I proposed to take my mother.

Pierre accompanied me. He carried a ladder, but it was found to be much too short. We, however, concluded it was long enough to place upon a barrel and reach to the edge of the piazza. And now we were to get into the yard. Pierre ran away down home, and returned with a large auger and a saw. I then mounted his shoulders, and bored a hole large enough to insert the point of the saw. I then began work. I intended to work slowly and quietly, but the excitement was too much, and I ripped away as hard as I could.

Presently I saw the glimmering of a light through the opening. I stopped and fixed my eye at the auger hole and looked through. And there were a black man and an elderly looking woman, the latter carrying a candle in her hand.

I overheard her saying: "I 'm sure I heard something in the yard, and I can 't rest until I find out what it is."

So they peered all around, looking up at the windows and scanning the fence. Then the man took a barrel which seemed to be partially filled with garbage, and standing on the edge, looked over the fence. He reported, however, that he saw nothing, and "guessed it must have been the rats."

The old lady, however, was not satisfied. She insisted that they should walk all around the yard. They came within two feet of me. Fortunately the shrubbery was a little thicker there than elsewhere, so we were not discovered.

She said, as she passed, that Mrs. —— must be better, she guessed, as she was up now, and she could see her shadow on the curtain as she moved about. "Strange!" she said; "why, only a little while ago she was so faint that Mattie had to come down stairs and borrow my lavender bottle. Now she is up and dressed. It is strange. I guess I shall have to go up and see about it."

They went into the house. My attention was

directed to the window by her remarks, and I concluded that her fainting had been a ruse to mislead the family, and that she was now making arrangements to come away with me.

I resumed the sawing, after covering the saw well with tallow, which Pierre had been thoughtful enough to bring along. Soon I had sawed a sufficient distance across, and we succeeded in making a hole large enough to admit the body. Pierre then cut the shrubbery away with his jack-knife, and we both entered the yard, dragging the ladder after us.

I looked at my watch, and found that we were in good time. We cautiously placed the ladder upon the inverted barrel, and Pierre ascended. He crossed the piazza and gave a gentle tap at the window, then raised it cautiously, and my mother, having previously blown out her light, came out. Not a word was spoken. I stood holding the ladder firmly in its place. My mother came down first. I felt her dress. I caught her in my arms. I carried her across the yard. Yet not a word was spoken. This precious burden, and yet I could not say "Mother!" I first passed through

the hole in the fence, and again I received her into my arms. She pressed my cheek to hers and kissed me, and said, "My son! my dear boy!"

I had carried her through the water and was hastening with her to the carriage, when suddenly she gave an unearthly shriek. I saw a glare of light, and that was all!

* * * * * * *

It was a week after this when I recovered my consciousness, and found myself in my own bed at Mr. Olcott's, and the sweet, pretty face of Helen leaning over me. She kissed me, and said, "Thank God, he will live!"

Of course I made immediate inquiries as to my condition, how I came there, and when.

And when my memory was turned back, and the circumstances began to arrange themselves systematically in my mind, I asked about my mother.

They told me that I should know all about it the next day, but that I was at present too weak.

Under the influence of some anodyne I then

sank into a pleasant slumber, and when I awoke it was the next day.

Pierre then informed me that just as my mother screamed, he was a little in advance of me, having started to have the carriage door ready opened, that we might hasten our departure; that he passed two men without seeing them, but that as soon as he heard the shriek he turned; but it was too late. I was prostrate upon the ground by a blow of a club, and my mother was held by a man whom he recognized by his voice as Mr. ——.

One of the men seized him, but he quickly threw him off; the other came to his assistance, and said if he would carry away the "body," (they supposed me dead,) that nothing should be said. Pierre thought it was useless to show any more resistance, so with their aid the carriage was brought, and I was placed in it and driven to my home.

A physician was called, who said that although the wound was serious, it was not necessarily dangerous; that by careful nursing I might be about again in a month.

So ended my attempt to rescue my mother.

But there was a sequel. I sent for Brown to come and see me. He came, and said that it it was fortunate that I had not sent for him sooner, as he could not have come. He told me that the black man had proved a traitor. He had not said through whom, but had informed Mr. —— that he had seen Mrs. —— draw a note up to the second story window by a cord, and that he guessed there must be something going on. He had invented this lie to shield himself. And when, on the evening of the rescue, Mr. —— was called down town by the decoy note, the negro had said to him, "Better keep a sharp lookout round the house to-night." He would not say any more. But this was enough to draw suspicion. So Mr. —— had procured the aid of two men (porters in the store), and they arrived just in time to accomplish their purpose and frustrate mine. If I had been five minutes sooner, I would have succeeded.

Brown then told me how he had been suspected of aiding me, and his uncle had determined to cast him out from the firm; but the expostulations of the other members of the firm

had saved him. This would not have been the case had not Mr. —— determined to leave the country. Only the day before he had sailed with his wife for Havre, with the intention of making that his permanent home.

Brown had brought me a little note, which my mother had handed him out of the carriage window, asking him to bring it to me if I was living. She said she knew him to have been in college with me, and she presumed upon that to ask this little favor.

The note I took, and read as follows:

"My Dear Boy;

"I know not whether I am addressing the living or the dead. O God! what I have suffered! what I do suffer! If you ever *can*, do yet try to set me free. I go to-day to Havre—No. 242 Rue de Rivoli.

Mother."

Then this was the last of my mother. At least so I thought at the time.

I began to recover rapidly. It was not long before I was able to ride out, and with little Hernando, to take my favorite drive to Snedicor's, on Long Island.

I again met my boon companions, again resumed my habit of social drinking. I discovered, however, that I wanted it more than formerly, and took larger quantities. Owing to this and to the weakened state of my constitution, perhaps, I discovered that my hand trembled when I wrote, and that I did not possess my wonted composure in conversation. I thought that something must be done. I therefore determined that I would moderate my drinking practice. But who that has tried it but knows that this is impracticable, and especially when in the company of those who are continually drinking and urging to drink?

Another motive, however, now influenced me. I had arrived at my majority, and according to agreement, I was now to ask Mr. and Mrs. Olcott for a long-coveted treasure, the hand of their daughter.

Helen gave her consent readily, as indeed we had belonged to each other from childhood. And one evening I took her by the hand and led her to the room where her father and mother were seated. I did not use any studied phrase, but simply told them that Helen had consented

to be my wife, and as in duty bound, we had now come to ask their consent.

There was no sentimentality about it. But there was a deep love between us. Her parents knew it, and for their daughter's happiness they could not say No.

Mrs. Olcott drew her daughter to her and said she knew it must come; that it had come too soon, however, but that Helen and I had her full consent, with her blessing.

The father, however, said nothing, but took a card from his pocket and wrote, "I would like to see you alone," and handed it to me.

I looked to see why he had written and not spoken so simple a request, and discovered that he was unable to speak. His eyes were filled with tears, his lips were tightly pressed together, and his chin quivered.

He led the way back to the front parlor, leaving Helen and her mother behind.

He took hold of my hand affectionately, and held it in his own all the time he talked to me. He said:

"Henry, the day has come which I hoped to have set down as one of the happiest of my life.

In one view it is so, but in another it is very, very dark. I loved you from the very first time I knew you. I respected your father more than any other of all my acquaintance. And your mother's great wrong was an error rather than a crime; for when I knew her as a girl, a more high-minded, strong-principled person never lived. I believe she is still the same, but there was a blank in her heart, and that villain knew it, and so led her from her home.

"You have education, family, and, prospectively, a large fortune; for I can inform you of what you do not know—that I have to-day attested the will of your uncle, in which he leaves you the whole of his property, upon the condition that you marry my daughter. And I am sorry to say that the symptoms of his disease indicate that he cannot live many days.

"Besides, my daughter loves you, and has never known what it was to love any one else. And I believe you love her from a full, true, and manly heart. Now, if this marriage does not take place, I blight my only child's happiness for ever. I becloud the sunshine of my happy home. I deprive her of a high-toned,

honorable gentleman, a gentleman of family and of very large fortune, as her husband.

"Now, you see the sacrifice her parents make and that she makes, if I do not assent to this proposed union. *But, Henry, I will make all this sacrifice, and see my daughter laid beneath the sod, before she shall marry a drunkard!*"

I sprang from my seat. I looked him straight in the eye. I said, so fiercely that Helen and her mother came rushing into the room:

"*But, sir, do you call* ME *a drunkard?*"

It was a painful scene. My betrothed and her mother had both heard my words, and from these had gathered Mr. Olcott's opposition, and the reason for it, to our marriage. The mother plead and the daughter swooned. When a sufficient degree of composure had been secured, Mr. Olcott again took my hand, and with the tears streaming down his cheeks, said:

"My son, prove to me for six months that you can abstain entirely from intoxicating drink, and none will be more happy than I to bless your union with my daughter."

I took hold of the Bible with my left hand, and lifted my right hand to heaven and swore

that from that moment not a drop of intoxicating drink should ever pass my lips, except it should be prescribed by the physician.

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

INTRODUCES CLOUD, DARKNESS, AND SUNSHINE.

I DID not know what the resolution and the oath to renounce drink was to lead to. No one does until he makes the effort. It is very difficult to break any well-established habit. Who has not tried it in the way of sleep? You now retire at midnight and arise at eight o'clock in the morning. This has been your practice for years. You are convinced that it will be better for your health, for your business, or your study, if you retire at ten and rise at six. You make the trial. Being in bed two hours before your accustomed time, you can not sleep. You toss about restlessly. You are tempted to rise and

take a book until you shall become drowsy. But there is your resolution. So you try to fight it out. After a time you fall asleep, the time, however, deferred beyond your usual hour by the nervousness excited by trying to sleep before. Consequently, when the bell rings at six in the morning, you are more disposed to sleep than ever. You roll over and take another hour; but you resolve that the next day you will begin in earnest. Of how many do I give the experience in this!

But this is a small matter. Yet how difficult to break even this habit! How many have tried to break off from the use of tobacco! And what a struggle it has cost them! And yet the use of tobacco is an unnatural habit. The taste for it has to be cultivated, and that, too, by painful, sickening effort.

There is no habit so strong, and consequently so difficult to break, as the habit of drink. It is one that is easily formed. The wines which are taken at first are very pleasant to the taste. They produce a thrilling of the nerves which, as a new sensation, is exceedingly delightful. By slow degrees, however, a stronger stimulus is

required, and the man passes from fermented to spirituous or distilled liquors. These stupify, while at the same time they excite. They throw one into a delicious oblivion. The man, for the time, forgets his troubles. His anxiety gives place to mirthfulness. He is not the same man that he was. He is not himself at all. The enemy he has admitted into his mouth has stolen away his brains.

How easy, therefore, it is for a man seeking a sensual delight to turn to the intoxicating cup! Or, if he is in trouble, how convenient to have a bottle near to make him forget it! And when he has tested such delights, or so easily found such reliefs, how powerful is the temptation to the cup upon every occasion!

But even when there is no such special object to be gained, yet the taste has been formed. It has become a second nature to the man to drink. He feels it to be just as much of a necessity for him as is the food he eats or the clothing he wears. O, pity the poor drunkard! If you have never been a slave to drink, O, pity him who has been and who yet is! Yet what misery his habit entails upon himself, upon his family,

and upon the community! He loses his self-respect. He neglects his personal appearance. He permits his face to go unshaven, his hair unkempt, and his clothing to become ragged and filthy. He shuns his former respectable associates, or else they shun him. If he has been a church goer, he breaks off from this practice. If he has been taught to read the Bible and to pray daily unto God, he now no longer does these things. He will fraternize upon terms of equality with the outcasts whom, in his sober days, he regarded only with complacency and condescension. He will even sleep in a horse-stable or a pig-sty. It imbrutes a man. It makes a beast of him who should ever reflect the angel.

And then how his family suffers! He forgets or neglects them. His love for wife and children changes to indifference. He is heedless of their comfort. The house goes to ruin. The children can not appear decently, and so are not sent to school, to church, or to Sunday-school. They become the byeword and the scorn of other children. They are obliged to resort to all sorts of make-shifts to procure bread. What wonder

that they grow up ignorant and vicious! What wonder that they become thieves or murderers! O, the drunkard's vice is not confined, in its terrible effects, to himself; it is entailed upon his children and children's children. It turns the once happy home into a place of discord. Where there was plenty is introduced gaunt poverty. Where there was virtue is now vice. Where there was a God, a Bible, and a family altar, there are now quarrelings and a struggle for bread. O, how often I have seen this!

It is rum which makes the heaviest tax upon the community, for it builds the almshouses, it fills the jails, it peoples the hospitals and the lunatic asylums. And all this makes a tremendous tax upon the honest, sober, hard-working people, for their support. And if any wicked scheme is concocted in the halls of legislation, in some way or other rum is connected with it. It is the greatest power and the greatest curse of the country.

"I embodied the above in my journal, young gentlemen, more than twenty years ago," said the Wreckmaster, "and I find it is true yet, and becoming worse and worse."

He then resumed the thread of his narrative by repeating the words: "I did not know what the resolution and the oath to renounce drink was to lead to."

It was made under peculiar and very pressing circumstances. The alternative was presented to me to break off this habit or to lose my dear little Helen. I determined to be true. I could not endure the thought of passing through life alone without her. And suppose, then, she should become the wife of another! O, the very idea maddened my brain, and prepared me for any thing.

One day passed, and another, and another. I felt good. I congratulated myself that the habit had not been so strong, after all. I thought it was easy enough for *me* to give up drink.

On the evening of the fourth day, I was returning home after taking dinner with a friend, (and who, too, I should say, had tempted me with his liquors, but I had resisted and conquered,) when I observed a little black dog following me. He came up to my side wagging his tail; then he ran forward, and then again

fell into the rear, as dogs usually do when they accompany their masters. I chirped at him and whistled. He approached almost near enough for me to pat him on the head, and then galloped off again. This he did repeatedly.

I thought nothing of it, only that a dog had lost his master, and had adopted me. This was a frequent occurrence with me, as I was always very fond of dogs, and had a kind word for almost every one I met. I supposed this dog had recognized me, and remembered some past kindness; and with this thought I tried to dismiss him from my mind. But I could not. There he was yet. All the way, for more than a mile, that dog followed me. He seemed to fascinate me. I tried again and again to get hold of him, but he evaded every attempt.

When I arrived at home, he came up the steps with me. I drove him off, fearing he would come into the house. I entered, and shut the door quickly; but behold, there was the little black dog before me! I chirped and tried to recall him. He turned and wagged his tail, and ran up the stairs ahead of me.

I pursued him with the view of catching him.

He stood at the entrance to my bedroom door. I took hold of him by the neck. He gave a yelp, *but I had nothing in my hand!*

I began to search for him up stairs, down stairs, in the parlors, and even in the cellar, although the doors of the different rooms were shut, and that of the cellar was bolted.

What could it mean? The family were all in bed, and, I supposed, asleep.

I went to my room and threw myself upon my bed, but I did not catch a wink of sleep. I was never before so worried as by this little innocent circumstance.

When I heard the servants moving about the house, I arose and washed my face, which presented a very haggard appearance, and went down stairs and inquired if they had seen a little black dog in the house, informing them that one had followed me the previous evening.

But none of them had seen him. Pierre said that he had opened the front door, and he was sure that none had gone out. Hernando and I then searched the cellar and the garden, but could get no trace of him. And what added to the mystery was that on that evening the

streets were very wet and muddy, and yet no tracks of the dog were seen either upon the stone steps or upon the oil cloth in the hall, while the marks of my boots could be traced up the steps and all through the hall to the foot of the stairs.

I returned to my room, wondering what it meant. When I came down to breakfast, my appearance led them all to inquire if I was ill. I replied that I had not slept very well. But I could eat nothing. I went down to business, but my hand trembled so that I could not write. I asked to be excused. The request was readily granted. I ordered my horse, and taking Hernando with me, I started out on my usual route for Snedicor's. I stopped and got a cigar, although the landlord looked a great deal of surprise that I did not ask for liquor. I then drove out as far as Jamaica. On my return I stopped at Snedicor's again. By this time the gentlemen began to arrive from the city. I mingled with them, as usual. They invited me to drink, but I steadily, though politely declined. They inquired the matter. Some laughed, and said that "Singleton had become

a temperance man." Others said they guessed it would not last long. Others asked if I had joined the church, while others said, "That need make no matter, as the parsons and the elders all had their liquors."

I was a favorite with the company I usually met there. So some of them seriously sat down at my side, and with great concern wished to know what had come over me. They were sincere. They really believed that some calamity had befallen me. And for a man to renounce the pleasures of "the flowing bowl," was to them a more serious matter than to lose the dearest of earthly friends.

I merely replied that I had deliberately determined to renounce liquors of all kinds as a beverage. I had good and sufficient reasons for my course; and if they were the gentlemen I had ever found them to be, they would respect my opinions and my feelings, and not invite me to join them in their bouts.

This was a sore cut to them, and it was hardly less so to me. It severed the social tie which bound us. For us not to drink together would result soon in not associating together. And

so this coterie of intelligent, well-meaning, jovial, genial gentlemen would count one less, and that one would be myself.

I felt that from that moment I was isolated. I stood alone. I had severed myself from my companions. I had not counted upon this in my resolution and solemn oath not to drink.

When I took my seat by the side of Hernando, they all waved me a sad good-bye, evidently feeling that I was lost to them. And so I felt. I had not enjoyed my ride.

In the evening I went to the theater. But every thing fell flat upon me. The music appeared discord, the acting mechanical, and the laughter of the people mockery. I felt tremulous, sad, lonely. Some terrible calamity appeared hovering over me.

I walked home. It was about eleven o'clock at night. As I came to the spot where I saw the little black dog on the previous evening, the circumstance came into my mind. I instinctively turned and looked about me, and, sure enough, *there he was again!* He galloped toward me as if delighted to see me, and then acted in the same manner as on the night before.

I was frightened. I called him, and he came. I tried to get hold of him, but could not. I became angry and picked up a stone and threw it at him. He yelped, and putting his tail between his legs, disappeared in a side street. I had not gone the distance of a block, however, before he returned. I tried to pay no attention to him. But I could not resist the fascination.

Again he followed me to the steps. He then paused and looked up, as if for permission to enter. I hooted at him, and saw him go up the street, then quickly opened the door and passed in. Now, I thought, I have succeeded. But there, right before me, with his head turned toward me, and wagging his tail as if in delight, stood the little black dog, waiting for me to come up to him.

I ran after him, threw my hat at him, took the canes and umbrellas from the rack in the hall, and threw them at him. He seemed to be hit at times, and gave a short, quick yelp.

The noise aroused Mr. Olcott, who came out in his night-clothes, asking what was the matter. I told him that a dog had followed me

into the house, and I could not get him out. He came to my assistance with a boot-jack.

"Where is he?" he said.

"Just gone down into the lower hall," I replied.

We both went down stairs. "There he is!" I cried. "Look out for him. Don't let him get up stairs." I threw canes and umbrellas at him as fast as I could gather them up. I could distinctly hear his yelps. All the while Mr. Olcott stood as if struck dumb.

"Why, Henry," he said, "I do not see any dog."

"Don't see any dog! There, look! He is there, right before you, wagging his tail."

But he persisted in his statement that there was no dog there. I thought him crazy or blind, and I told him so, and, I am afraid, in not a very respectful tone either.

He came down the stairs, and placing his hand tenderly on my arm, said:

"Come, Henry, my boy, you had better go to bed." I was trembling like an aspen leaf. "You are ill," he added. "I will send Pierre for the doctor."

He led me to my room. I undressed and laid down upon my bed. Turning over toward the door, *there stood that dog again!* I shrieked. I leaped out of the bed and seized the metal spittoon to cast at him, but I could not find him.

I tried to sleep, but could not. The doctor came, and Pierre and Mr. Olcott with him. He examined me. I told him of the dog. He asked when I had drank the last glass. I told him five days before. He knew my habit. "Ah!" he said, "That 's it. *The man has got the delirium tremens!*"

This was my case, and the apparition of the little dog was the first symptom. O, it was dreadful—dreadful in the experience as well as in the disgrace.

The doctor said I could get immediate relief by brandy. I looked at Mr. Olcott. I saw he was watching my countenance. This was the central turning point. Should I yield and lose my Helen? A ray of triumph passed over his face as I said:

"No, doctor, I have sworn it, and I will die before a drop shall pass my lips."

And I did die a thousand deaths. O, what

horrors I endured! What sights passed before my eyes! What sounds filled my ears!

I was confined to my room for several weeks. At times I was literally confined—held in the strong grasp of Pierre, or with my arms tightly bound behind me. I threatened every body. I cursed my mother, Helen, Mr. Olcott, Pierre. I could not be left alone for a minute. I cried "Brandy!" "Brandy!" until I became hoarse; and because they would not give it to me, I sat down on my bed and wept and sobbed like a child. I was raving.

One morning I awoke from a most delightful dream. And the real world seemed no less delightful. The window was raised, and the balmy breath of Spring was entering. The blue-bird and the robin were chirping in the trees of the garden, and Helen was sitting with her work-basket at the open window. She had not yet observed that I was awake, and so I laid and watched her. O, how beautiful she seemed! Yes, it was worth the sacrifice.

I spoke. She instantly came to my side and imprinted upon my lips one of her sweetest kisses.

"O, Henry!" she said, "it will be right now. The crisis is passed. The doctor says there need be no fear of a return of the delirium. Father says that after this he is willing to trust me to you."

"But, Helen," I said, "this is too bad for you."

"Don't speak of it," she said, and again I received a pearl into my mouth.

I slowly began to recover. I resumed my place in the office. My uncle had died during my illness, and I had become heir to his large fortune. I disliked to be idle, so for the time being I still acted as clerk to the old firm.

I remained faithful to my oath for the six months. I had conquered. Cloud, darkness, but now sunshine!

I can not close this chapter more appropriately than by quoting a passage from the letters of Charles Lamb—"Gentle Elia," as he is sometimes called. Poor Charley knew something of the experience I have herein described. He says:

"Could the youth to whom the flavor of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of

life, or the entering upon some newly discovered paradise, look into my desolation and be made to understand *what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will—to see his destruction and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself;* to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about him the piteous spectacle of his own self ruin; could he see my fevered eye, feverish with last night's drinking, and feverishly looking for this night's repetition of the folly; could he feel the body of the death out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered—it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth in all the pride of its mantling temptation; to make him clasp his teeth,

And not undo 'em,
To suffer WET DAMNATION to run through 'em."

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

OPENS A NEW CAREER FOR THE WRECKMASTER.

IT was a beautiful day in midsummer. Mr. Olcott's family had taken a country seat upon the shores of Long Island Sound, a few miles above the city of New York. It was an old, long stone house, surrounded with trees, with a lawn sloping down to the water's edge.

I remained in the office only a short time after my last severe illness. Although the position was kept open for me, I hesitated about assuming it again, for since my uncle's death I had a sufficient fortune.

I therefore spent the most of my time at this place. Being a skilled oarsman, my chief recreation was on the water. I knew the favorite localities of the different kinds of fish which

filled the bays and creeks, so that I kept the table constantly supplied with the choicest of the season.

How delightful the recollection of those days now! Many years have flown by, but I yet recall, with peculiar emotions, those quiet summer evenings, when, with Helen in the stern of my boat, which I had carefully cushioned and carpeted for her use, I rowed out upon the broad waters, and then, casting aside my oars and permitting the boat to drift with the tide, we talked. We talked of the past; we talked of my poor, imprisoned, persecuted mother; we formed good resolutions; we arranged plans for usefulness; we talked of the future—where our home would be—how we would furnish our house—who should be our guests, and other matters without number.

At length the day arrived. Old Dr. Livingston had been invited to perform the ceremony. Relatives and friends of Mr. Olcott's family gathered by the score. I had invited my two college friends, Shaw and Brown. These made our wedding party. We stood under an immense elm tree immediately fronting the old

mansion. The guests stood around in a group. In the background were the servants, among them Pierre and Hernando. And there we pledged our troth.

We were pronounced to be husband and wife. The friends congratulated us in the usual way, and then we repaired to the large dining hall for the feast. This ended, there was dancing until night, when the guests returned to their homes.

And so we were married. A sense of responsibility rested upon me such as I had never felt before. I had a pure and beautiful girl, an only daughter of wealthy and refined parents, one educated in the best schools the city afforded, as my wife. How I inwardly resolved to make myself worthy of her! How I reiterated my determination never to permit the accursed cup to touch my lips! What prayers I offered unto God to aid me in my solemn resolve!

Having a competency, and loving country life, I resolved to purchase a farm. I found one to my liking on Long Island not very far from this place, and situated near to the race-course.

I stocked it with cattle of the most approved

breed and keep a few horses, one of which I purchased purposely for his speed. And there in lay the seeds of my future fall.

Few people know the fascination of a fast horse. But of those few, not many escape the dangers into which he will certainly lead them. All the rapture which seizes an artist in looking at a magnificent landscape, or at a superior work of art, will, upon occasion, seize the connoiseur in horse-flesh. With his eye he measures his length, carefully notes the proportions of one part of the body to another, calculates upon his color, the shape of his foot, the bend of his leg, the amount of flesh his build will allow him to carry to the best advantage, the nose, whether Roman or blunt, the ears, whether pointed and narrow or broad and long, the breadth between the eyes and the ears, the curve of the chest, the lifting of the foot, its forward carriage, whether too far or too short, the swing of his body, the condition of his lungs and stomach, the nostrils, whether contracted or expansive, the roll of the eye, the degree of nervousness or stolidity he displays—all these points are to the horse fancier what

columns, capitals, fluting, proportions, site, and surroundings are to a pile of architecture, and he becomes carried away in his enthusiasm.

Whatever may be said about the taste such an enthusiast may display, I only state the fact that for a large number of people there is this fascination about a horse. And when they see him upon the road, when all these excellent points are brought into exercise, and stretched to their utmost tension, while the sagacious animal seems all the while conscious of his powers, and strives to do his best, they often lose themselves in the rapture of their excitement and admiration. I have seen them caress their favorites to an extravagant degree—throw their arms around their necks and kiss them, and weep like children over the least mishap to them.

Well, on my farm, with but little to do, I became such a one. My pet, "Messenger," was a noted racer. I did not care for the purses he won on the course at first. My pride was to see him surpass every thing that was entered. But by degrees I, too, embraced the practice of betting. Of course I stood up for my own.

A famous race was to be made. Four blooded steeds, two from the English turf, were entered. My Messenger was one of them. There had been a long advertisement previously. Not only the professedly sporting papers, but all the journals, and even some which were called religious, had made frequent reference to the race about to come off. It was the topic of conversation every where. The taverns, the corner groceries, the club-rooms, the parlors, and even the church steps, had an exciting group talking of a horse race. Great placards were posted, not only in the vicinity of the course, but hundreds of miles away. Many gentlemen had even made the voyage from England and from New Orleans, for the purpose of witnessing it, and this, in the day when there were no ocean steamers, and the time consumed in sailing was measured by weeks rather than by days, as at present.

I had made full preparation for the event. I scarcely slept for anxiety. I watched my horse as a mother watches her child. Twice a day he was walked. Then he was exercised over the course. My groom slept in the straw of the

stable by his side. His driver was sweated to reduce his flesh, and himself rubbed and chafed to keep him in good condition. If Messenger should win, his driver was to receive one thousand dollars, and the groom one hundred. Thus they were both encouraged to do their best.

The eventful day arrived. Before daylight every road leading to the course was thronged with vehicles of every description; and thousands, too poor to own or hire a conveyance, were making their way on foot.

Tents and booths were arranged all around the course, and extended for a mile up and down the turnpike, where the venders of refreshments and fancy wares drove their trade. Hand organs and monkeys, panoramas and shows of various kinds were in numbers. Thimble-riggers and gamblers, with various means, had their places to catch the unwary. Not only New York, but all the cities of the United States seemed to have emptied their vile characters upon the Union Race Course.

There were rows of benches arranged at points around the course, each one raised above

the other like those at present within a circus tent. There were places reserved for ladies, many hundreds of whom were present. Other prominent positions were kept for public officials, such as Governors of States, Mayors, and Congressmen. A circular stand was placed at a distance from the places assigned to the spectators, for the use of the judges. A flag extended from this over the course, and indicated the place of departure and return for the racers.

I am thus particular in describing the races in those times, because, in many respects, they differed from the present. There was less immorality, but yet there was too much of it. The course was frequented by the respectable portion of the community; now it is not so. Customs have changed in this respect, just as in drinking. Then, to be a total abstainer, was so singular that the person was set down as a fanatic. Every body drank. The sideboards always contained a variety of drinks. And the man so poor or so negligent as not to offer his visitor a glass of rum, was considered exceedingly mean. Happily this is no longer the case.

On the morning of the day of the race my

excitement was intense—almost beyond my control. I had already wagered a very large sum upon my Messenger, and was ready to risk very much more. And yet, if I should lose all that I was ready to pledge, I knew I should be bankrupt. I had become so far led away.

I was not only affected by my pride in my pet, and a desire to add to my fortune, but a national pride rose above these. As I said, two of the racers were from the English turf. We had not a great while before concluded the peace with England, after what we call "the late war," and the old revolutionary feeling had not yet entirely died away. I was all over, and through and through, anti-British. If I should be made penniless, but could beat Old England, I believe I should have been entirely satisfied.

Messenger was in excellent order. We had succeeded in reducing his flesh so that his ribs were just visible, and seemed to creep to and fro under his nicely loosened skin. His veins stood out prominently, and you could almost see the pulsation as the blood throbbed through them. He lifted his feet as if he weighed nothing. His eye flashed intelligence and the

fire of health and vivacity. When he was reined up before the judges' stand side by side with his competitors, at first he trembled like an aspen leaf; but he soon regained his composure, and I felt sure of victory.

Every eye was fixed upon the racers. Men spoke low in the intensity of their feelings. No one laughed. It seemed positively solemn.

The drivers sat their horses slightly inclining forward, holding the reins with just enough force to anticipate any sudden fright.

And now all was ready. At a distance a single stroke upon a drum was the signal to go. The horses understood, without a word being spoken.

Messenger fell in the rear. It was as I had planned. An English gentleman stepped to me and said: "Fifty thousand that Messenger is beaten this heat." "Taken," I said, and passed my card to a mutual friend.

Soon I had the satisfaction of seeing my pet gradually gain upon the others. At the half-mile most he was abreast of the foremost. At the three-quarter post he was a neck ahead. He came in a full length in advance! The Englishman's horse was number two.

What shouts rent the air! What congratulations I received. I despatched a messenger to Helen, informing her of the result of the first heat, for she was almost as much interested as I was, although she generally opposed me in keeping a trotting horse. I believe she would have herself witnessed the race, but that her little girl—my only child—was lying quite ill with the scarlet fever.

Friends gathered around and overwhelmed me with their congratulations. I was overcome—almost beside myself. I crossed over to the Englishman, and first with one, and then another, proposed to bet all that I had won and fifty thousand besides, that Messenger would win the race. The race was to be decided by the horse gaining two out of the three heats. None of them would take me up. At length a gentleman accepted my offer. He was apparently a stranger to all the company. I therefore regarded him suspiciously. He brought forward his vouchers, which were satisfactory to the arbiters, and so it stood. If I should lose now, I would be a poor man; but I was, for the time being, utterly beside myself.

The time came for the next heat. Excitement ran higher. With almost the stillness of a funeral, the tens of thousands watched the struggling racers. At first, this time, Messenger led the whole. Gradually he fell back, and came in at last number three!

What was the matter? I feared treachery on the part of the driver. Perhaps he had been bribed.

I approached him, and taking him on one side, said: "Jim, I can't account for this bad defeat. If you win the next heat, I will make your promised reward of one thousand, five thousand dollars."

"Massa, I 'll do my best, but I dun'no what ails him," said Jim, and he cried like a baby.

"I said, "Jim, did Mr. ——," mentioning the name of the man who had taken my immense wager, "say any thing to you?"

"Yes, massa, he offer me three thousand ef I let Messenger be beat."

"And what did you say?"

"I told him that I love dis yere hoss like I do my life, and I 'd die fust. But, Massa, I dun'no what ails him. He coughed twice, and trembled

jes' as I stopped as ef he had de chills and fever."

I examined Messenger, and called a celebrated farrier to aid me. We discovered nothing special, except that there was occasionally a gutteral breathing very low down in his windpipe. We, however, pronounced him sound; and when the time was called for the last heat, he was promptly in his place.

A third time the drum tapped. Again the horses flew like the wind. Messenger went as if wild. He took the lead at the start, and kept it past the quarter post, past the half post, past the three-quarter post, when suddenly he fell back, the others passed him, and when within twenty feet of the stand he stopped, trembled, *and fell dead!*

I was beaten. The hated Englishman had won. I was bankrupt, and my beautiful horse dead upon the course. O, what agony was mine!

I did not know what to think. I dismissed the idea of treachery. Then I recalled Jim's remark that Messenger coughed after the second heat, and my hearing of the hoarse sound in his throat. I concluded he had been poisoned; and

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it must have been by the gentleman who had accepted my large wager.

And yet Jim said that he did not touch the horse, but only examined him at a distance. No one had sponged his mouth but Jim himself. I swore most horrible oaths. May God forgive me! I raved like a madman. I cried vengeance and blood to whoever should be the criminal.

The doctors assembled and dissected Messenger's stomach, and there, sure enough, were the unmistakable traces of poison.

But who did it? I could not convict the strange gentleman. I charged him with it, but of course he indignantly denied it. I employed an officer, with the promise of an enormous sum, forgetting that I was a pauper, to ferret out the matter.

I was too greatly mortified to return to my home. I went to the tavern and called for brandy. I drank and drank again. I jumped on an omnibus and rode ten miles into the city. I went to a low groggery in Water street, and drank until I was again the beast that I had been once before. In the morning I found myself, with scarcely any clothing on my person,

lying on a cellar door attached to one of the worst dens in New York city.

As I began to recover, I was so ashamed that I went immediately to a shipping office and booked myself as a sailor before the mast, on board a vessel that was to sail that day. I did not know where she was bound, nor did I care.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

WHICH BEARS THE WRECKMASTER ABROAD.

THE ship was the "Calais." She was bound for Bordeaux, in France. Her crew was composed almost entirely of Frenchmen. The captain could speak English quiet fluently. There was also a negro on board as a passenger; and he was the only passenger.

I had shaved off my beard, and being in full sailor costume, I felt sure of not being recognized.

As I gradually sobered from my desperate debauch, and began to reflect upon my course, my reflections were exceedingly painful.

I was certainly a pauper. I had deserted my lovely young wife and the prettiest little babe that ever was born; and now I was upon the

broad ocean, leaving my native land, and engaged in an employment for which I was not only not adapted, but which was positively repulsive to all my tastes and inclinations.

I performed my duties to the best of my ability, and in silence received the profane rebukes or the coarse compliments of the officer in command. Assuming that I did not comprehend the French language (in which I permitted him to be deceived), he made allowance for my numerous blunders on that account.

I need not narrate the particulars of the voyage, for all sea voyages are pretty nearly the same. After the first few days they become extremely monotonous. We saw a few icebergs, occasionally a whale, every day large shoals of porpoises. One day the water was green, another a chestnut brown, and again yellow. The different varieties of sea-grass, the phosphorescence, and the currents, afforded me opportunities to apply some of my knowledge of natural history. One day and night we had a severe storm. I admired its grandeur, and was sorry when it ceased. We also came near having an affair with what the captain said was an English

cruiser, for the English were at war with the French at that time, the great Napoleon being Emperor of France.

One evening, just before we reached our port of destination, and the sailors were gathered in groups telling the stories of their lives and adventures by land and by sea, I overheard the name of Mr. ——, my mother's husband, mentioned. I drew near the group, and discovered that it was the negro passenger telling a company of sailors a story of a horse race. He was speaking in very glib French.

I sat down among them and listened. Like the rest, the negro supposed that I did not understand the language, so he manifested no reserve whatever, and I heard the whole plot from beginning to end—how Mr. —— had employed him to accompany the strange gentleman who accepted my large wager on the race; how well he had been paid to get poison in the sponge used to refresh Messenger's mouth at the end of each heat; and how he immediately left for New York, and heard in the evening how well he had succeeded.

In this unexpected way I learned the extent

of the hatred of that man for me. He had deliberately set about to ruin me, and, as far as wealth was concerned, he had succeeded.

I determined to learn more from the negro, and looked for an opportunity to see him alone. When it came, I asked him if he understood English.

"O, yes," he said, "I was born in New York."

"Indeed!" I replied. "And how, then, did you get a knowledge of French?"

"Why, you see," he said, "I have lived with Mr. —— in New York and in Havre this twen ty years."

I scanned him closely, and then remembered that he was the negro who was my medium of communication with my mother through Brown.

"Where do you live in France?" I inquired.

"In Havre."

"Why did you not take a vessel bound for Havre, instead of this one to Bordeaux?"

"Well, you see," he said, "I got into a kind of a scrape, and I took this ship to put the officers off the track."

This ended the conversation at that time.

I had shipped only to the port for which the vessel was bound. This was the case with all the men, for France being at war with England, it was uncertain when a return voyage could be made.

Arrived at the wharf, I received my pay, which amounted to quite a sum in gold. I then proposed to the negro to accompany him to Havre. The distance was about four hundred miles in a north-westerly direction. It was no slight undertaking.

We started on foot, resolved that we would take the high road leading to Paris. When we had got well out of the city, and in a lonely part of the road, I turned to the negro, and in the French language told him that I was Singleton, and that it was my horse which he had poisoned.

He started to run, but I tripped him, and grappling him by the throat, held him until he begged for his life, and told me he would do any thing in the world for me.

His name was Job.

"Job," I said, "if you will lead me to where Mr. —— lives in Havre, and help bear my ex-

penses there, I 'll forgive you every thing; but if you attempt to deceive me, I 'll take your life's blood."

"O, massa Singleton!" he said, "I 'll do any thing; I 'll do any thing; only do n't kill me."

The fellow really felt that his life was forfeited, and that I had the right to take it; and to show the extent of his fear, he unbuckled the belt of gold he had about his person, and gave it to me. He then said he would go as my servant.

We soon became friends. I promised him that I would use no more of the money than was necessary to defray our expenses, and he seemed satisfied.

We were occasionally interrupted by military officials in our course, but our papers, dismissing me as a French sailor, and Job as the servant of an American gentleman at Havre, carried us through.

Sometimes we rode in a regular passenger conveyance, sometimes in an army wagon, and some days we walked the whole time. It took us about a fortnight to reach the city of Havre.

And now my plan was to rescue my mother. It seemed as if Providence had called me to France for this very purpose. But how to proceed was the great question. I hardly dared trust the negro, for he was false to his master in New York. He had also lent himself to the commission of a great crime. I finally concluded to work upon his fears.

The night we arrived in Havre we took lodgings at a sailors' boarding-house. We slept in the same room. I had purchased a suitable citizen's dress on my journey, and Job passed for my body-servant.

In the middle of the night I went to his bed armed with a dagger and a pistol. I shook him until he awoke. His first impulse was to scream out, but I placed my hand on his mouth, at the same instant telling him to be quiet and he should not be harmed.

"Job," I said, "I mean that you shall not betray me. You have reduced me from wealth to poverty. You were the means of my breaking a most solemn pledge never to drink intoxicating liquor—that which has been the curse of my life. You made me fly from my home, my

wife, and little child. But Providence has placed you in my way, and through you I may accomplish one object in life, namely, to get my mother to America. Job, you are in my power. In this city there is living an American consul whom I happen to know, and who was once confidential clerk in my father's store in New York. I will have no difficulty in getting you arrested and taken back to New York to be tried for your crime; and I will do it unless you aid me in my plans. If I succeed, you will be rewarded. You see I can afford to be desperate, for I have nothing to lose; and I can also afford to be generous if I succeed, for with my mother's income from her own patrimony, and my wife's prospective fortune from her father, I will have ample means at my command."

Job assented to this, if I would allow him to get back to New York, for he said he hated to live in France; and besides, he was tired of doing the mean business Mr. —— required him to do.

We walked together to view the premises where Mr. —— and my mother resided. It was a stone house, with a carriage drive right

through the center, which was now closed by two nicely fitting gates. This was the only mode of entrance in the front, the house, otherwise, being flush with the street. It was surrounded by a large garden, which was enclosed by a very heavy stone fence, very high, and with sharp spear-heads pointing the whole length of the top.

We went around the garden until we came to a little gate opening from a very narrow alley-way, and in the very corner of the garden. It was so extremely low that one had to stoop to enter it, and was so arranged as to be entirely concealed from the casual observer. Job told me of the course from this gate to his room, for when at home he acted in the double capacity of butler and gate-keeper.

We then returned to our lodgings, and arranged that each night, at a certain time agreed upon the night previous, and at a given signal, I was to have a conference with him at the gate. I could then keep myself acquainted with all the movements of Mr. ——, and so accomplish my purpose and liberate my mother.

I sought and obtained employment as trans-

lating clerk in the branch of a Philadelphia mercantile house. I took humble lodgings, and disguised myself as completely as possible. I had my hair cropped, and permitted no beard to grow except on the upper lip. I also passed under an assumed name, and led my employers to believe that I had been some years in Paris.

One day, as I sat at my desk in the inner office, who should come into the store but the man who had ruined me in the race. He inquired for Mr. ——, and took his seat just beneath the little pigeon-hole opening on my desk. In a few moments the husband of my mother entered, and after a most cordial greeting and welcome back to France, took a seat by his side.

"Tell me all about it—all about it from beginning to end, Davis," said Mr. ——.

"Davis! Davis!" I said to myself. Ah! I have made a discovery. After Mr. Pelham had left my father's employ as confidential clerk, he employed a Mr. Davis in his place, and he was there until my father failed. I had never seen him, but this gave an explanation of what Brown had said—that Mr. —— had been in-

strumental in producing my father's insolvency. This, then, was the man. If he could lend himself to Mr. —— in the first instance, of course he was prepared for the other.

O, how my head throbbed and my heart beat with excitement! Here were the enemies to my peace—my life-long persecutors, under my very eyes. I could hear their faintest whisper. I could almost hear them breathe. I found it difficult to restrain myself. Involuntarily I looked for some weapon with which to take summary revenge. I grasped a paper-weight in my excitement, when the post-boy thrust a handful of letters through the pigeon-hole.

This diverted my attention, and brought back the sober second thought. I passed the letters to the head of the firm, and then resumed my place. And then I heard Davis' account of his nefarious expedition.

"Well, Mr. ——," he said, "I followed your directions most explicitly. Job was faithful all through, and I think his reward ought to be increased.

"When we landed in New York, we went to the Merchants' Hotel, and there we found out

how the wind blew. All the Americans were loud in praise of Singleton's horse, 'Messenger.' Bets ran high; and after finding out, by sliding here and there among the Englishmen, which was the fastest from their side of the water, I took up the bets which were made two to one by the Americans on Messenger. I knew Messenger should not beat, and I also knew which of the English horses was the best. So you see I had a sure thing of it.

"It was a good thing for us, Mr. ——, that you gave me the liberty to draw on you that you did. In consequence, we are each a hundred thousand better off to-day than before I left France."

"That is all very well," replied Mr. ——. "But about Singleton—did you do the business for him?"

"Well, I reckon!" replied Davis. "If ever there was a goose plucked, he was the one. We completely broke him. His place, cattle, horses, and all have passed under the hammer—every thing is gone. There happened to be enough to satisfy all his creditors, but that took all. Indeed, I felt so sorry for his family that I

called upon old Olcott and offered him ten thousand dollars for her benefit. But you know what a proud old fellow he is. He told me to keep my money, that he had enough; but if I could cure the desolate heart of his daughter, he would be thankful."

I felt faint, and came near falling off of my stool. O, my poor little Helen! And I the whole cause of it. But I rallied and yet listened.

"But what became of Singleton?" asked Mr. ——. "Job could not tell me any thing about him. You know Job sailed on the first tide, early the next morning."

"Well, there 's a mystery about Singleton," replied Davis. "Some say that he committed suicide, and some that he left immediately for foreign parts. It is certain that his clothing was found at an old clothes establishment in Chatham street, New York, except his pantaloons, which were fished out of the water near the dock, and had the unmistakable name written in India ink upon the lining of the watch-pocket. This is the evidence for his suicide, in connection with the fact that he became grossly

intoxicated, and lay in the cellar of a Water street dance-house all night after the race."

"Well," said Mr. ——, "that 's pretty good circumstantial evidence; but I 'd like to hear that they 've found the body. I hope it is so. But why do some disbelieve the suicide? Is there any positive evidence that he is alive?"

"Mr. Olcott, I understand, says there is," replied Davis; "and he surely is interested in knowing."

"But what evidence has he?"

"I did not get it directly from himself, but another told me that Mr. Olcott has satisfactory proof that Singleton had sailed for France."

"For France!" exclaimed Mr. ——, rising to his feet. "Singleton in this country! Then there is more trouble ahead. Why did you tell me this, Davis? I can 't sleep now for the memories of the past, and I had thought that the knowledge that Singleton was in his grave would bring his mother around right, and I might know a little happiness yet."

And he buried his face in his hands and sat thinking. What did he think?

Davis aroused him, and they left the store.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

REVEALS A DOUBLE SURPRISE.

I KEPT up a regular communication with Job. He had not yet revealed to my mother my arrival at Havre. For two months I endured this suspense. In the meantime I wrote to my wife. Besides expressing my sincere repentance for my course, and my determination to adhere to my total abstinence pledge if she would forgive my disgraceful fall, or find excuse for it by the extreme provocation in the case, I gave her my assumed name and address. I had not yet heard from her, but expected some sort of communication by the next ship coming from America.

I counted the days, and then the hours when

a letter might be expected. At length the mail arrived. It was thrust through the pigeon-hole of my desk. I ran quickly over the superscriptions, but there was none for me. With trembling hand I passed the package to the main desk and returned, and with my head between my hands, I wept like a child.

All sorts of questions passed through my mind. Could it be that Helen had cast me off? True, I thought, I had merited it, but I could not believe it possible. If so, what of my little child, the young Helen? She was my child. My heart went out to her. Every morning and evening I mentioned her name in my prayers to God. Am I then alone—all, all alone?

These reflections were painful, and I must have been absorbed in them for a long time. The bell on the tower was striking twelve, while I thought that it was yet only the beginning of the business hours. This aroused me, and turning my head in the direction of the entrance, I saw what I thought to be an apparition. And who do you suppose it was? Hernando, my favorite colored boy, and just come from America—from home! I could have em-

braced and kissed him on the spot; but I had sufficient self-composure to restrain myself, and Hernando had evidently been instructed to be cautious, for he pretended not to recognize me, although he was looking straight into my face.

The porter approached me and said that there was a colored boy just arrived from America, who wanted to see some one who could converse in the English language; and knowing that I had lived in America, he asked if I would not see him.

I was too happy to converse with him under such a plausible cover as this. So I beckoned him to come into the rear of the store, and there, seated each upon a bale of goods, I heard good news from home.

Helen's father was a man of kind disposition, but of a very strong will. He saw the letter I had written, and with repressed emotion had forbidden Helen writing a reply. A dependent upon him, almost a worshiper of her father, she could not disobey him; but she resolved to communicate, notwithstanding. With the breaking up of my home after my flight, Hernando had been thrown out of regular employment, and

had made his living chiefly by holding and tending the horses of the gentlemen who stopped at Snedicor's hotel in their daily drives. With her daughter, Helen directed Pierre to drive, the next day, on the Jamaica turnpike as far as Snedicor's. He was happy to do this, for he had not seen his son Hernando since the day of the fatal race.

Helen had all her jewels, except some which her father had given her, converted into cash, to which she added a large amount her father had the day previous handed to her for her own use. With this she directed Pierre to prepare Hernando, and ship him by the next vessel for Havre. She told him what to do, what to conceal, and what to reveal. He was to remain near me, and remittances were to come to him for me. I was to live according to my station, and Hernando was, as of old, to be my body servant. And then I was patiently to wait. Helen thought that time would repair the breach between her father and myself, and if I remained true to myself, we might be again reunited.

This was the substance of what Hernando

conveyed to me. But he brought me a miniature ivory portrait in a beautiful gold frame. There it is, young gentlemen. (And the old wreckmaster, with trembling finger, pointed to the portrait on the wall which we have before described.)

What a treasure that was to me! How many times has the sight of that sweet, innocent face restrained me from excess in vice! Yes, more than once I think it has kept back the suicide's hand. I have carried it over the ocean time and again, and nothing could tempt me to part with it.

I directed Hernando where to meet me after business hours. He then aided me in transferring my scanty wardrobe to a more suitable lodging-house, and he remained in my service.

Fearing lest some mishap might prevent me from receiving regular remittances from home, I continued to hold my place in the office. I also met Job very frequently at the gate in the rear of the walled garden. I took Hernando with me, that he might become acquainted with the locality, thinking that perhaps his services might at some time be required.

My object in not permitting my presence in Havre to be known to my mother, was to prevent any chance of her husband ascertaining the fact of our communication. It was better to wait until some propitious circumstance should temporarily call him away from home.

I was compelled to wait a long while. The delay was painful in the extreme. I had the satisfaction, however, of learning that my mother was in excellent health, and that she was not subject to the brutal treatment she was accustomed to in New York. Her liberty, however, was curtailed, and she was made aware that she was all the while under the suspicious eye of a jealous husband.

He was not jealous from any fear that she loved another except her son—myself. But he knew that not only did she not love him, but she hated his very presence. Her deportment before him was that of a dignified lady simply discharging her duty. It was cold duty, with the absence of anything like affection.

A circumstance occurred which came very near frustrating my long-cherished plan of abducting my mother.

One day Hernando came in at my dinner hour very much excited, crying out, "O, Massa Singleton, I 've seed her! I 've seed her!"

"Seen whom?" I asked.

"Why, Missus Singleton, sure. And, massa, she knowed me, too."

"Was her husband with her?" I inquired.

"O yes, and he axed me where Massa Singleton lived now-a-days."

"Well, and what did you say to him, Hernando?"

"O, I told him a whopper, jest a whopper. I told him you was dead and buried long ago."

"What did he say then?"

"He asked where I lived, and what I was doing in France."

"What then?"

"I jest told him that I came over as body servant with Mr. White, who was going back next week. And then I said it was dinner time and I must go."

Hernando's discovery placed me in danger, but his strategy (if bare-faced deception can be called such) put Mr. —— off the track.

His thoughts after the conversation which I

overheard under my pigeon-hole, had led him to make diligent inquiry for me. Job informed me that he had frequently questioned him about the crew and passengers who came over in the ship with him. He had also consulted the books at the different hotels to ascertain if I had arrived in Havre. But all to no purpose. I had a fortunate escape.

And now my course seemed clear. Mr. ——, having his suspicions of my presence allayed, would feel at liberty to go from home; for Job had told me that he had never remained for as long a period in his house before.

A few evenings after this, I had the satisfaction of knowing that Mr. —— had gone to the south of France in company with my other despoiler and enemy.

I left Hernando and Job in conversation at the open gate while I proceeded to the house, having received correct information as to the habits and room my mother occupied.

I went up a rear stairway, knocked at the door, and was admitted by herself.

The shock was too sudden. She had evidently accepted Hernando's report of my death as

a fact; so that my appearance there must have seemed like one risen from the dead. She stood for a moment motionless and pale, and then sunk into my arms in a swoon.

I feared to call for help. So, placing her upon a lounge, I looked for some restorative, and found Cologne water, with which I bathed her face, and also applied it to her nostrils.

She slowly recovered, and, as if still unconscious of the reality, said:

"My son! my dear boy! God has answered my prayer. Come, let us away."

I calmed her, and told her that my plans were not ripe as yet, but my intention was to bear her across the ocean.

O, now, now," she said. "I am afraid of delays. We were defeated once, and I dread the consequences if it should happen again."

I, however, satisfied her that there was no need of haste, but advised her to make all preparations for a sudden departure. I also told her that Job was in my confidence and in my power, and that he was compelled to do what I commanded.

My mother then gave me her sad history. I

sat for two hours listening to her tale of woes. Her repentance was deep and sincere; and her love for me was—well, I say all when I say a mother's love. I felt the need of this in my forlorn condition, just as much as she needed to know that I loved her.

We parted with a good-night kiss. Job met me at the door and conducted me to the garden gate. I heard him close it behind me, while with Hernando I hastened back toward my lodgings.

This had been one of those periods of exquisite bliss which happen occasionally in a lifetime. The hope of meeting again, which had been so long deferred, and which had made the heart so often sick, had been realized. All my doubts respecting my mother had been removed, all my fears allayed; and I found myself no longer the orphan deserted one. I was the prodigal returned. I had found a heart. That heart was mine; it was rightfully mine. Mother —my mother, and I her only son. And now to know it when I had become a man, to know it in a strange land, to know it as one banished and disgraced, to know it when a friend was

most needed, to find that friend, and she my own long estranged, long absent mother!

It was a luxury of bliss. It almost intoxicated me. As trouble had, on previous occasions, made me wakeful and sleepless, so this full cup of delight came near turning my brain. And as great trouble had, in the past, been the occasion for my sudden rushing to the wine cup, and from this to the grossest forms of intoxication, so I found the same influence drawing me through the intense excitement of superabundant joy.

Hernando walked by my side. As I came near my hotel, the sound of revelry proceeding from a saloon arrested my attention. I paused, and told Hernando I guessed we would stop in a moment.

The place was brilliant with lights and merry with music. Scores of ladies and gentlemen were promenading between the rows of tables arranged on either side.

I took a seat, Hernando standing behind my chair. A waitress approached me, and inquired what I would like to have. I hesitated a moment, and then said "Brandy."

The bottle was brought and the glass. I lifted it to pour out the liquor, when Hernando caught my arm. I asked what he meant.

"O, nuffin, Massa," he said, and released me.

I took the bottle again, and he repeated the same act.

I lifted the bottle and struck him with all the force I could command. The blow took effect upon his arm instead of his head, as I intended. The bottle was shattered into a thousand pieces.

The people rushed to the rescue of the poor negro, for I had pounced upon him with the ferocity of a tiger.

As soon as I recovered myself, I found that I was in the hands of an officer. Hernando pleaded for my release. I immediately saw the whole proceeding. My excitement had found rest. I did not longer crave the stimulating liquor.

I could have kissed the swollen wound I had made upon the arm of my poor boy. I actually did ask his pardon in the presence of the officers and those surrounding us. I was also compelled to make a confession of my weakness when under the pressure of any great excitement, and

how Hernando had saved me from another disgraceful downfall.

I have never forgotten his wisdom and fidelity on that occasion. It was one of the many times I have had occasion to test him, and it would be impossible for any bribe to draw that man from my service.

Sleep slowly crept over me after I had lain myself down upon my bed. But the gray dawn of the morning was just then appearing. It was late in the day when I arose. My head throbbed, my pulse beat quickly, my hands were hot, and my tongue thick. I felt that I was again on the verge of a crisis; but I thanked God and Hernando that just then the fatal cup had been smitten from my hand.

CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH

TELLS OF THE RESCUE, FLIGHT, AND DISPERSION.

AFTER several brief interviews, stolen and by night through the rear gate of the stone wall, every thing was so completely arranged that it required no secresy to carry out the plan for my mother's rescue. As I said before, Mr. ——'s widowed daughter and her little son were inmates of his household. I had never met them; and from all that I could learn from Job, their relations with my mother were pleasant.

A part of our project was, however, to get them out of the way. To do this, we were obliged to resort to another strategy, which was the same in kind as that used to decoy Mr. ——

away from his home on the occasion of the attempt at rescue in New York.

Knowing that Mr. —— was expected to remain for some weeks longer in the south of France, we used a decoy letter, inviting her and her little boy, with their attending maid-servant, to visit him there and return home in his company. As an excuse for Mr. —— not himself writing, and as an additional reason for her to come to him immediately, we stated that he was afflicted with the inflammatory rheumatism which had settled in his right arm and shoulder, and so had disqualified him from using the pen.

She made immediate preparations for her departure; Job and my mother assisted. She had no sooner gone than the trunks were packed, the passage engaged, and Job and my mother waited the day of sailing.

The time seemed long; but, disguised again as a common sailor, I stood upon the pier and saw the vessel sail away to America, home, and freedom!

To avoid suspicion, Hernando and I had engaged to sail from another port. I closed my accounts at the store, and together I and my

faithful boy started on foot to take our departure. We were obliged to wait several days. On the morning we expected to sail, I was dismayed by reading an account in one of the Havre papers "of the elopement of Mrs. ——, the wife of the celebrated American banker, Mr. ——," which was followed by a minute description of her appearance, a reward offered for her arrest, and also for the arrest of her son, a young man recently in the employ of Messrs. ——— & ———, commission merchants. This meant myself. A reward goes a great way in France, and the police are very vigilant; so I trembled for fear that the officers of the law were on my track.

However, the vessel weighed anchor at the appointed time. I was on board as a first-class passenger, with Hernando as my servant. All fears of capture were now at an end.

I had left behind me a long letter addressed to Mr. ——, acquainting him with the fact that I was instrumental in delivering my mother from her bondage to him. I gave him the reasons therefor in plain language. I also warned him not to pursue her to New York, for, besides

other modes of punishment which I had in hand, I should arrest him for a conspiracy to bankrupt my father; that I had sufficient evidence to convict him, not only of that crime, but also of the other, no less base, of reducing me to poverty.

Notwithstanding this, Mr. —— did attempt to follow her. As I afterwards learned, he took the very next ship from Havre for New York. The ship was wrecked off the west coast of Ireland, and he was numbered among the lost. The sea had received its prey. This time the victim was one whose crimes rendered him unfit to live; and from its watery depths his soul took its flight to the presence of the Great Judge of all. There we are content to leave him. I followed him there with no imprecations. God is just. His counsel shall stand. And what is His pleasure I am perfectly content to accept as mine.

One thing, however, it brought me—a sense of relief. Although it was some years before I learned of it, I felt that at least my mother was safe and among friends, and for ever separated from him.

From this point my fortunes took a singular turn.

The sea, at that time, was full of cruisers, some from America, and many from England. We were at peace with both nations, but more friendly toward the French than the English. These cruisers did not call themselves pirates, but their conduct was very similar. Americans, in their lawless procedure, sought to make fortunes from any English or French merchantmen they could overhaul.

While among the West India Islands, where we had been driven by stress of weather, one morning we discovered a suspicious looking sloop under full sail, making directly for us. It was useless for us to attempt to get out of her way, for the numerous little islands and coral reefs compelled us carefully to select our channel, while the sloop could cross many of the latter, and course her way through little streams not large enough for a full-masted ship.

At length she approached us and gave the signal for us to put up the helm, when a boat's crew came aboard armed with pistols and cutlasses. They were a ferocious looking set of men. It

would have been madness to attempt any resistance, for besides their own weapons, two brazen cannon were pointed through the port-holes of the sloop, ready, if occasion demanded, to rake our whole length.

The officer in command demanded our papers. These were delivered up. Then he asked for the treasure. This was chiefly in Spanish milled silver dollars and half dollars, and was packed in kegs and canvas bags, and stored in the cabin. He gave a signal, and immediately another crew put out from the sloop in another yawl, into which was placed the ship's treasure. Then he required each one of us to be searched, and all our private property was taken except the clothing upon our persons.

Then calling the crew together, the captain made a speech, in which he said that he was a man of honor, and so were all his men; but that he had been wronged, grossly wronged, even to the loss of his property, his family dishonored, and himself made an orphan, by the owner of this vessel: and he had sworn both to have revenge and to retrieve his fortunes. Now he had secured it. He had followed us from the

coast of France with this object in view, and he had accomplished it. He had never molested another vessel, and had no designs further than to divide the booty with his men and return to America, and there live quietly the remainder of his days.

We now expected, from this display of magnanimity, that we would be permitted to go on our way. We waited anxiously his decision upon this point.

Turning to us again, he said: "Dead men tell no tales. But do not be frightened. Should I permit you to go to New York, you would be so many witnesses against me. I should surely be convicted of piracy on the high seas, and my portion would be a short piece of rope on Gibbet's Island, along with Captain Kidd. You may rest assured I shall escape that fate, if possible. I am driven, therefore, to this alternative. I leave you to choose."

Pointing to an island about ten miles distant, he said: "That island is uninhabited. There is no mode of approach there for a large vessel, and but one narrow entrance for a sloop. I believe I am the only man who can reach it

except by small boats through the breakers. Now I propose that you allow me to run this ship hard upon the shoals in a place which I shall select, and from which you can have access to her from the main land, and that I land all of you upon the shore; that you each and every one sign a parole, which I have here prepared, not to seek to escape for a period of two years; that you accept these conditions, or *die!* My case is desperate, and yet I wish to be merciful. Your ship is bountifully provisioned with a miscellaneous cargo, and the island itself will spontaneously provide your necessary food."

We looked at each other in dismay. To be cast on a desolate island, under a tropical sun, and to remain there for two years! O, horrible! And yet either this or death.

We pleaded with him, but in vain. One impulsive sailor said he 'd die first.

"So be it," said the captain; and raising his pistol, he fired. The man fell, and lay on the deck weltering in his gore.

This determined our course. We agreed to the terms, and signed the parole. One after another the men were transferred to the sloop

and there placed under guard. A few remained, by our captor's order, to assist in managing the vessel.

He signalled the sloop to follow the ship, and then, taking the helm into his own hands, he guided us through a very tortuous channel, seemingly hardly wide enough between the reefs for her to pass. Certainly there was no way of receding.

We saw the end of the channel about a mile distant. Crowding all sail, he drove the great ship hard up over the first and upon the second ridge of coral.

The water scarcely covered the ridges. We saw that the ship was hopelessly ashore, and that the land was within easy reach.

The sloop slowly glided under her stern, and a few yards beyond reached a beautiful open harbor.

For the moment I did not feel sorry that we had experienced the adventure; for the place itself was so transcendently beautiful. We could look down into the deep waters between the coral ridges for sixty or a hundred feet, and see the fish by thousands, of all sorts, shapes, and

colors, passing in and out of their places of refuge. On the shore were tall and graceful palm trees, up which were growing immense trailing vines, with flowers whose perfume almost intoxicated the senses. Birds of bright plumage flitted to and fro among the leaves and the vines, and sent out notes wild and soft, unusual to our ears. The ground itself seemed crowded with the luxuriant growth of shrub, while the banana tree seemed loaded to the earth with its wealth of fruit.

It was just the place for a colony; but we did not, after all, relish the idea of being enforced colonists. We were there, however, and compelled to make the best of it. We had the ship for a home until we could erect one on the shore, and we had provisions sufficient for our support for a long while to come. The thought of absence from home, with no prospect of communication, even, was sad enough.

The cruiser's captain promised that after two years he would, by some means, make known our whereabouts, so that those of us who wished it could return to their homes. He added that we might blab then as much as we pleased—the

more the better, as he wished his French enemy to know who and what hurt him; and as for himself, he would be far enough away to be beyond the possibility of harm.

We saw the sloop, with its crew and its treasure, depart. With a homesick feeling we watched it until the hull disappeared, and then the masts, and then the little streamer on her peak, which we continued to follow with the ship's glass. It had gone.

We then directed our attention to ourselves.

Our captain said he had been in these waters before; that he had his bearings; that this island was not upon the chart, it being so entirely surrounded by reefs; that only the reefs were marked. There was one thing he knew, and that was that although the ordinary flow and ebb of the tide was not very great, still at times, and as the effect of earthquakes in these latitudes, there came, occasionally, a great tidal wave, which swept every thing before it. He also added that the present was the time of year—and there were other circumstances indicating it—for the occurrence of these phenomena. He therefore counselled that we procure

canvas and spars sufficient from the ship to make a tent well up on the island.

We followed his advice, and in a few hours had erected a very large and comfortable house. Hernando and two of the ship's boys had in the meantime caught a large quantity of fish, and one huge green turtle. The former was prepared by the ship's cook, and our first meal was a feast. The turtle was turned over on his back and left there to meditate upon his probable fate.

The captain's prognostications were correct, for during the night we heard a strange, unearthly roar. The air was still and stifling. Not a leaf stirred. We looked out toward the ship, and behold! she was entirely out of the water, for the sea had receded, and it seemed as if we were miles inland.

Still we heard the unearthly roar; and by the light of the moon we looked through the glass, and there, sure enough, was the great tidal wave. It looked as if it reached to the very heavens, one great, upheaving mass of water, black and threatening! On it came. We hoped it would spend its force before it reached us; but we began to fear.

"To the trees! to the trees!" cried the captain.

And so we leaped up into the palm trees, and sat aside of great broad leaves. The birds chattered wildly, and strange, weird-like sounds came from the various unknown wild denizens of the island.

On came the great wave. We saw it lift our ship bodily upon its crest. For a moment we feared that it would be carried from us back into the sea. But lo! it was approaching us; and now, cracking and crashing through the branches, we saw it pass by. We were for a moment thoroughly submerged. Our trees, however, remained fixed in their places. For two hours were we obliged to remain there until the waters had sufficiently receded to permit us to descend; and then it was to find our tent completely shattered. The canvas lay scattered all about the island, and many of the spars were gone; but in its place we had our ship. A ship on dry land! That was our home. But for the fear of a return of these terrible earthquake waves, the enforced absence from home, it seemed as if we were going to enjoy a per-

petual pic-nic. We had fish from the sea in numbers and variety, and without end. Every night we could capture as many of the great green turtles as we pleased. Luscious fruits grew abundantly, and within easy reach. And the soil hardly required scratching to prepare it for planting any thing, and it seemed to grow without any further care. Besides this, there were biscuits by the ton, and liquors by the tierce, and cheeses, and pickled fish, and dry goods enough to stock a village.

We resolved the next day to explore the island, and afterwards to organize a provisional government.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

BRINGS THE WRECKMASTER INTO HIS PROFESSION.

THE ship's company was divided into squads, who received instructions from the captain to go out in different directions and survey the island, and to report at the ship-house in the evening.

At the appointed time all returned and gave their various accounts of the day's observations.

Squad No. 1 was under the command of the ship's captain. They reported having found a great amount of wrecked stuff, timbers and spars, and kegs, many of which were filled and many empty. Squad No. 2 reported substantially the same, adding that they had also discovered many whitened bones on the reefs,

which were undoubtedly the remains of shipwrecked sailors. Squad No. 3 reported having gone up a slight ascent, not high enough to be called a mountain, and yet too high for a hill; there they had found a beautiful stream of water, which they had traced to its fountain-head, and there, in a cave, they discovered unmistakable traces of a habitation. There was a bucket half filled with water, some charred pieces of wood, one of which they had brought away with them, a sail-cloth and a hammock, some pieces of crockery, and one cup half filled with tea. They could not say whether the inhabitant was about or not. Squad No. 4, of which I was the guide, had, however, the most important report to make.

As we wandered along the shore, one of the men remarked a horrible stench. It was evi. dently a carcass, whether of some animal, sea-monster, or man, we could not guess.

Guided by the scent, we searched, and behold, it came from the putrid corpse of a man! His dress told us directly that it was one of the sloop's crew which had left us only two days before. The heat of the sun in this torrid

zone, acting directly upon the dead matter, had produced almost immediate decay.

It was a horrible sight. The body was bloated to double its natural size, while great bottle flies were feeding upon it, and myriads of little crabs were marching like an army over it and devouring it. The birds had already plucked out the eyes.

I said to my men, "Look out, now. There must be more; and the wreck of the sloop will undoubtedly be found somewhere near this place."

It was too true. After passing on about a half a mile, we came across more bodies, and then pieces of wreck, and at length, in the midst of a dense thicket, the great mass of what was once the sloop. All around it lay dead men.

We carried home with us some of the evidences of the truthfulness of our report.

We now had work on hand. We resolved ourselves into a mass meeting, and organized a sort of government. The captain was made President, and myself Vice-President. We then selected four from the crew as counsellors. All promised obedience to this government on this

island, which we called, in imitation of the Spanish in those waters, "St. Colombo."

The President directed me to make known to the people of our new republic, numbering, exclusive of the officers, thirty-seven souls, our first commands.

A dozen men, having provided themselves with spades, were to go out the next morning, and give the dead bodies of the wrecked crew of the cruiser's sloop a decent burial. This was to be both for decency's sake, we calling ourselves Christians, and also for the health of our little community. Six more were to accompany them, and gather all the valuables which might be found on their persons, and also to search for the sloop's treasure, and to bring it to headquarters. Twelve more were assigned the duty of searching the island in the neighborhood of the fountain for the inhabitant or inhabitants of the place, and induce or compel him or them (if there should be more than one) to come to our house. The rest were to remain, and, under the direct orders of the President, put our home in order.

The men went to their work with alacrity. I

accompanied the party which was to search for the treasure.

By night we were all at home again. We found that a great change had taken place during our absence. The captain had succeeded in making a new temporary deck on the ship, which was necessary, as the vessel lay on its side, and had covered the whole of it with canvas. This he had divided into compartments for sleeping. He had also carpeted the whole with linen, large quantities of which were stored in the hold of the ship. He had put a mirror into each apartment; also a washstand and a bucket, six camp chairs, and cot for sleeping. Not only was the whole place comfortable, but cozy and very attractive. This was his first day's work. He had also projected a plan for kitchen and dining-room on the ground, and beneath the higher side of the great hulk of the vessel. The next night found this also nearly completed.

After we had all gathered together, the squad in search of the inhabitant of the island came forward, and with them a strange-looking man. They reported having seen him in the under-

First Meeting with Crocker.—P. 235.

brush, and that he immediately started to run from them. They pursued him, but he was swifter on foot than any of them. By good fortune, however, he stumbled and fell, when the company came upon him. He made no resistance, but moaned like a child. He was completely mad. Yet he was clothed. But with his unshaven face, and long hair matted over his shoulders, and glaring eyes, he presented a very pitiful appearance. He kept moaning and whining like a whipped dog. We could not get a word from him.

We hardly knew whether we ought to confine him as a dangerous man, or treat him kindly, as an object of pity. The most of the men were of the opinion that we had better put him in irons. I remonstrated against this, and plead for the privilege of taking him under my special charge. I designed in this an act of mercy; but I was also curious to try my art in restoring his reason. I directed three men to take him to the beach, wash him, clip his hair, and reduce his beard to a tolerable length. He assented to all this without uttering a single word, but his whine took a different tone as if pleased with

the operation. For the time he was placed under the guard of two men, and assigned to my sleeping quarters.

I was curious to see how he would act when brought into the room. He walked straight to the mirror, looked in, and burst out into a loud laugh. I handed him a book. He nodded and smiled, and then amused himself by looking at the pictures. I then left him to make the report of the day's operations.

When I told the company that we had found all the treasure that had been taken from us, they all cheered. And when I told them that the cruiser had lied to us, and that he was a regular pirate, the evidence of which was abundant, and that our treasure was increased fourfold, their joy knew no bounds. We were not bound by a promise to a man who had played us false. Nor, since his only object in enjoining upon us to remain two years on the island was chiefly to protect himself, now that he was dead, did we consider ourselves at all under obligation so to do. We were free men; and the most of us were richer than we had ever been before.

But of what use was all this bullion on a desert island? How should we get away?

To get home! This was now our prayer and daily aim. We looked out upon the ocean every day to discover a sail. The days passed and the weeks passed, and the months passed—no sail! We planted seeds, and they grew, and the melons ripened, and the potatoes ripened, and the grain ripened. A whole season passed. We gathered in our harvest, yet no sail!

We fished and hunted. We had abundance of sport—if that can be called sport when the heart is homesick—O, so homesick! We ate and drank. No sickness visited us for a whole year. Every thing seemed prosperous with us. But we wanted to see a little speck of canvas rising on the swell of the ocean above the horizon; but not yet. Two years passed. It seemed as if we were doomed to remain there for ever.

And now a fever—the yellow fever—broke out among us. One after another the brave boys succumbed to it. They left us the address of their friends and their last messages; and we buried them in a row not far from our quarters.

Then the captain fell a victim. I sat by and watched him. He said: "Singleton, I 'm going. Take this, and send it to my wife." He spoke in his native French tongue. Then opening the folds of his red flannel shirt, and nestling down deep in the meshes of his shaggy breast, he brought forth a little miniature done on ivory, and suspended to it a ring containing a large and brilliant diamond, and also a little pocket book. "Tell her, if you live to see her, or write to her, that I die a Christian, and we will meet again."

He turned his coal-black eyes up to heaven. His chest heaved like the swells of a lazy ocean. With one more deeply-drawn breath, a quiver of the lip, a nervous stretch of the limbs, and that brave heart ceased to beat, and the noble form lay stretched in death.

And so the work of death went on until only six remained. Hernando was very ill, but recovered. I did not take it at all. I can not account for this, except that ever since leaving France I had not tasted a drop of spirituous liquor. Every other man drank as much as he pleased each day, for there was abundance

of it on the island. We found keg after keg of the choicest of liquors among the *debris* on the shore, which had come from the many wrecks.

I had determined to school myself that I might be the man my dear wife would be proud to call her husband, should God ever restore me to my home, and so I had not, up to that hour, touched any spirituous liquors from the day of sailing from France. All the time I was in Havre I had been a strict teetotaler. The only time I was greatly tempted was when my noble Hernando had risked his life in striking the bottle from my hands.

We six, all of that number left, felt very lonely. We did not know how soon the demon would appear again. We resolved, therefore, to live like men, and, if we must die, to die like men.

I became a sort of a minister. That old Greek Testament (pointing to the one his father had left) I translated and read in portions every morning and evening. We took turns in prayer. We became a Christian family. Some of the men had been drunkards; they were now temperate. They had been profane; now an oath never passed their lips. They had been infidels; now

they saw a fitness in the Bible for all their spiritual necessities, and the unburdening of the heart in prayer was their greatest comfort.

The times had been solemn. They had been changed into joy—joy of a character new to us all.

We now set about seeking a way to escape with increased zeal. We made it our daily work. We planted three posts on different points on the island, and placed signals of distress on each of them. A man was placed at each post. Day and night we kept watch. We suspended a lamp at night about half way up the masts.

This was our life for another year. O, how long the time was!

My deranged patient had improved very much. We found him perfectly docile and harmless. He made himself useful in various ways. He began to articulate a very few words. And when I mentioned the names of different places to him, his face indicated that he understood me. When I mentioned New York he always smiled. I concluded from this that he was from that city. I tried in every way to get

his name. At length I ran over a catalogue of names with which every New Yorker was supposed to be acquainted. His face lit up whenever a familiar name struck his ear. I happened to mention the name of my father, giving it in full. His countenance fell in an instant. I then, recalling Job's story of Mr. ——'s instrumentality, together with Davis, in making my father bankrupt, mentioned Mr. ——'s name. He rose up, very much excited, and started to leave the room. I then mentioned the name of Mr. ——'s widowed daughter. The poor fellow screamed out! He had lost the power of speech, but his memory appeared to be partially sound, and slowly recovering.

I then set about the task of finding out his name. For this purpose I went up to his old cave and searched about, but found nothing. But as we wandered down by the beach, I discovered a large wooden trunk wedged between two reefs. The water under it must have been at least a hundred feet deep. It was sidewise, so that the lid could not be opened. I went back to the ship, and leaving my charge, returned with one of the men, a hammer and saw

I soon opened the chest, and there found that this poor creature was no other than Mr. Crocker, the husband of Mr. ——'s daughter. They had all supposed him dead. But here he had been cast, the only survivor of a ship-wrecked crew. And now he was demented!

I also found among the papers in this trunk complete evidence that Mr. —— and Davis had conspired with this same poor fellow to ruin my father and enrich themselves. They had succeeded in the former part better than the other. It was the ship upon which was depending the solvency or bankruptcy of my father, that had been purposely driven ashore here—those in command and the crew expecting to be soon picked up; but, alas for human plans! how often they miscarry! Every one had perished, either in attempting to reach the shore or by the scourge of yellow fever.

I thought that this poor fellow had but little claim upon my sympathy. I began to take less interest in him than formerly, when an event occurred which changed my mind toward him.

We were awakened in the night, not long after this discovery, by the booming of cannon.

Poor Crocker whined most piteously, and came to my cot, stroking my face and pointing over toward the sea.

The firing continued. It was certainly a ship. But instead of bringing us help, she was herself in danger. We ran to the shore, and we could see her plainly. The weather was a dead calm. But she had got among the reefs. We were now to be the wreckers.

CHAPTER THE EIGHTEENTH.

IS FULL OF HOPE AND JOY.

THE booming of the guns on the ship now engirdled by the coral reefs continued. Fortunately she lay entirely becalmed. Her sails hung loosely on the masts, yet there was death in front, death behind, and death all around her.

We all, six in number, manned the long boat and pushed out into the little harbor. None of us had ventured, before this, into the tortuous channels among the reefs, fearing that we would not find the way back again.

We were at a loss now; and yet there was a precious freight of human lives at stake. Besides, there was hope of our own deliverance, if we should succeed in extricating the ship from the meshes among which she was entangled.

And now our demented islander proved of inestimable value. Still unable to articulate but very few words, he yet seemed to comprehend the whole situation of affairs.

He stood at my side as I guided the boat, at the same time peering far in advance, seeking for the channel. Now we were compelled to turn to the right, and now again to the left, and, almost before we were aware of it, we had again reached the land.

I gave up the tiller in despair. The lunatic, as we called him, immediately seized it. It then occurred to me that he, having been a resident of the island for several years, might know more about the channels than ourselves. So I directed the men to row, and trust to him to guide the boat.

Round and round we went, seemingly making no headway; at one time it seemed as if we had made a complete circuit of the island. The ship was out of sight. But we knew her direction from the booming of her gun of distress.

At length we came to a wider space of water. The lunatic fairly yelled his delight. He steered straight on toward the ship, and came so near

that we could exchange sounds, although we could not yet be understood. We made another stretch of about a mile, turned a point of coral, and returned. This time we were in the same channel with the ship. We drew up alongside.

"What ship is that?" I said.

"The Delaware, of New York," was the reply. "But who are you?"

"Shipwrecked and cast away."

"How long since?"

"Four years."

"Quick, men, and bring them aboard!" shouted the captain.

Instantly the stairs were lowered to the water's edge, our boat was made fast, and we ascended to the deck.

I immediately directed the captain to cast anchor, for now the vessel was drifting along, and there was danger every moment of her grounding upon one of the reefs which were concealed several feet below the surface of the water.

We then sat down and told our tale, the captain and crew gathering around us. They listened with intense interest, and I could see

the rough tars wiping away the big tears which a common humanity made to flow.

When I mentioned my name, the captain looked at me with surprise.

"Singleton!" he said, "Singleton!" What, the son of Singleton, the tea merchant? the son-in-law of Mr. Olcott? and whose mother married Mr. ——?"

"The very same," I replied.

"Then," said he, "I have news for you. I am sorry to say it is not altogether good, either."

The captain then told me of the wreck of the vessel on which Mr. —— had sailed, and of his death. This I had heard before from the captain of the cruiser which was wrecked on our island. He also informed me that the ship on which my mother had sailed had been captured by the English, and in consideration of her being an American, she had been returned to Havre under a flag of truce, but that Job had been retained in the English service.

I told him it was good news. That he could not have given me any better. My mother was safe, and Mr. —— was gone.

It may seem inhuman to rejoice over any

man's death, but why should I act the hypocrite? I was glad, right or wrong; not so much that he had gone down to death, as that my mother was delivered from his hateful presence.

With these facts as food for comfortable reflection, we next turned our attention to saving the ship.

We agreed that we would render our services, and that the vessel was to bear our little company, with our treasure, to New York.

It was no small labor, however, that we had undertaken. Those only who understand the peculiar arrangement of the numberless coral reefs in the Carribbean sea, can form any conception of the difficulties we encountered.

Not to be tedious in the description, let it suffice that we were nearly a month in accomplishing our object of getting into the open sea. The most active agent in the operation was our poor lunatic. He seemed to have studied the currents, and to have mapped all the ridges—those exposed and those concealed—clearly upon his mind. Every day he preceded us, as helmsman, in the long boat, and when he had made an important discovery, he signaled us, and by de-

grees, with the smallest quantity of sail set, assisted by oars, we pushed along. We made a complete circuit of the island three times by this slow process. Not only was it slow, but exceedingly dangerous ; for any unusual breeze might drive us to the right or left upon the coral rocks, which, in many places, barely admitted the passage of the ship.

When the open sea was reached, we spent some time in gathering together our effects. It was not without considerable anxiety that we shipped our bags and kegs of coined silver, the treasure the cruiser had captured from us, and which, with more than four times the amount, the sea had returned to us again. Only six were now the possessors of the whole amount. To propitiate the crew of our deliverer, we immediately made each one, from the captain to the cook, a liberal donation.

And now the sails were set and we were "homeward bound." The voyage was a very long one. But at length we came in sight of land just off Cape Henlopen. Then we saw the light at Cape May. Then we proceeded northward, and now Barneget, and now Sandy Hook

and the Highlands, and now New York hove into view!

Our voyage was without any special incident, except the conduct of our lunatic. The nearer we approached our port of destination, the more excited he became. He whined and fawned about me like a dog. Sustaining the relation he did to my family, I was very anxious to restore him to them. And I had labored hard to bring back those particular faculties of the mind which were yet beclouded, and by practicing him in the way of speech, as if he were an infant, to bring back his articulation.

He was treated with marked kindness by all on board. He seemed to appreciate it. At times we surprised him sitting against the gunwale with his elbows upon his knees, and his head in his hands, weeping as if his heart was broken.

Coming from a southern latitude, we were quarantined for three days. During this time his motions were so strange that we deemed it well to watch him.

I had just gone below after giving him a lesson, and seeing that he was properly shaved and dressed to meet his friends, when I was startled

by a shriek. I immediately turned back, and looking over the side, saw my poor protege in the water! He had, in a fit of delirium which must have seized him the very moment I left his side, leaped overboard.

The boat was lowered. I jumped into it and took the helm. Six men pulled for the poor fellow, who had already sunk twice. As he rose again, one of the men seized him by the hair, and with the aid of his companion, pulled him aboard the boat.

He was still alive. I gave the helm to one of the men. Then turning him upon his stomach, I began chafing him. By the time we reached the ship, he was almost restored. We lifted him on the deck, and making a bed in the shadow of the main-sail, placed him upon it.

By degrees he revived, opened his eyes wildly, looked about him with great wonder, and then asked in words, to the astonishment of all—

"Where am I!"

Reason had returned, and with it the organs of speech had been unloosed. The dumb lunatic and the would-be suicide of a little while since was now clothed and in his right mind!

We entered the harbor, and made our way to the anchorage ground just off the Battery of New York.

I went ashore and engaged quarters for my friend Crocker, Hernando, and myself at the Merchants' Hotel. Thither we shipped our goods and treasure, bade the ship's company "good-bye," and were at home again.

As the excitement of landing and locating died away, the new anxiety about my wife and child took possession of me. Where is she? Is she alive? Will her father receive me? Such questions crowded upon me. Then came the thought that all had given me up for dead! Suppose she has married again! O, I could not contain myself! I was not in a proper state of mind to investigate these things. I felt that indescribable sensation again creeping over me such as I had experienced on several sad occasions before. I craved drink! Although I had not tasted it for six years, the temptation seemed now to be irresistible. I was on the verge of rising from my seat in the arm-chair by the window and going to the bar, when Hernando announced a gentleman in the parlor who wished to see me.

I went up, and there stood Mr. Brown. He said that he was part owner of the ship in which I had just arrived, and hearing from the captain, about an hour before, that I was a passenger on board, and had taken quarters at the Merchants', he had come to see me.

From him I gathered the history of events which had transpired since I left home. He confirmed the report of Mr. ——'s shipwreck and certain death as proved by the finding of his body. He also confirmed the report of the capture of the vessel on which my mother and Job had sailed, and her return to France. In regard to my wife, he told me that the report had become current that we were all lost among the West Indian Islands, and I had been mourned as if dead; that Mrs. Singleton had erected a monument in the graveyard to my memory, and that some friend had written some very flattering obituaries in the city papers. After about two years since I was supposed to be dead, Mrs. Singleton had a suitor in the person of my old dashy friend, Shaw. He offered her wealth, but she had no need of that. He approached her by professions of unbounded affection for me.

She humored him, and gave him the freedom of the house for that. He then presented himself in such variously devoted ways that at length she became disgusted with him. But he would not take a hint to renounce her hand.

Mrs. Singleton, having received repeated invitations from my mother to visit her at Havre, concluded she would go, in the hope that in this way she might shake off the irrepressible Shaw.

Her father died shortly after this determination was made, and Mrs. Singleton and her little daughter were lonely enough. The executors of the estate advised foreign travel, and she took her departure. She had been there now about a year.

This was the substance of the information Brown gave me. I did not know whether to be happy or sad. I had cause for both. I thanked God that my dearest friends were still alive; but then we were yet separated by the broad Atlantic.

This interview was not only of profit in the way of intelligence, but it was a diversion. It served the blessed purpose of turning me away

from the glass to which I had been prepared to resort. Just at the right time this finger of Providence interposed between me and another, perhaps, this time, fatal fall.

I immediately set to work to investigate my business affairs. A few vacant lots which I had owned had been sold for the payment of taxes which I redeemed. Their value had increased five-fold. The agent of my wife's estate informed me that she was sole heir to her father's estate. Besides these prospects, the amount of silver that I had secured, if I should be allowed to retain the whole of it, placed me in very independent circumstances.

I accompanied Mr. Crocker in his efforts to find the whereabouts of his friends. Father and mother had gone. His wife was yet in France · and with him there was the same dread that I had experienced, that, having concluded that he was dead, she had taken another husband.

He found his sister. She received us coldly at first. It was with the greatest difficulty that we could convince her of his identity. Even when convinced, there seemed more of uncertain anxiety about her than real joy.

The cause of this? *The accursed love of money.* She had thought there was one heir less, consequently she expected more of the paternal estate. Not having heard of Mrs. Crocker and her little boy for a long time, she had considered them as having perished with her father.

Poor Crocker was cut to the quick. He saw he was not welcomed, but only tolerated. An unwilling consent was given to his claims of relationship.

The arrival of this sister's husband made matters worse. He demanded proof of an impossible character, and finally dismissed him with the remark that "prudence required that he should consider him an imposter until clear evidence could be procured!"

And yet he and his sister talked over their childhood's days, their plays and books, their relatives and visits, in a manner that would convince any one possessing at the same time sound judgment and a regard for justice.

As we descended the steps, Crocker said, "Singleton, I 'm off."

"Where?" I asked.

"Any where where I can find a ship to take me," was his language of despair.

I told him not to give up yet. As for me, I should take the next ship for France. And as his wife was there, and the daughter of a rich man deceased, perhaps he had better go with me.

Before night our passage was secured, and in less than a week we were again afloat.

CHAPTER THE NINETEENTH.

GIVES THE ACCOUNT OF A FRUITLESS VOYAGE.

TO France again! This time under different circumstances from those attending my previous voyage, six years before. Then I went as a vagabond, a pauper, a drunkard; now as a gentleman, wealthy, healthy, and temperate. Then I flew from my home and family in disgrace; now I was seeking out my wife and child in the hope of a re-union, never to be sundered again, except by the ruthless hand of death. Then I was in despair and desperate; now I could toss my hat in the air with a cheer, so buoyant, so hopeful was my heart. So off for France again.

Mr. Crocker, the poor babbling lunatic of the island of St. Columbo, was now clothed in his

right mind. He was my companion. His errand, too, was one of hope, not unmixed with considerable doubt and fear. He knew that he had been long since given up for dead. He might be going to France only to have his horrible fears confirmed that his wife might already be the wife of another man!

We were in full sympathy. I had reason to consider him my enemy, when I remembered the part he had acted in effecting the financial ruin of my father; but I ascertained that he was the tool, pliant and easy enough, to be sure, of a designing man; but that was attributable to an excessively amiable temper. Mr. ———, his father-in-law, was willing to sacrifice the precious lives of a ship's crew, and make his own and only daughter a widow, and his grandchild fatherless, if he could only compass his wicked end to impoverish and humiliate my father in order that he might remove an obstacle in his way of obtaining complete control of the affections of my mother. And when he found that although the rightful husband died of a broken heart, as he intended, and that her heart went out even more strongly toward myself, her only

child, the same unrelenting, malignant spirit possessed and pressed him to remove me from the earth for the same reason. But a judgment had overtaken him. Suddenly he perished in the maw of the voracious ocean. The woman he loved, but who loathed his very presence, survived him. The man he persecuted is brought, like an apparition, to the land of her home, his widowed daughter has a husband, though as yet, she does not know it, and the supposed orphan has a father.

Mr. Crocker and myself spent the time required for the voyage in planning for the future. I was to get possession of the country-seat in Westchester county, and he was to purchase or to build in the neighborhood. We were then to resume business, and among our first projects one was to colonize St. Columbo. We were sufficiently well acquainted with the mode of entering the little harbor to warrant such an undertaking. And our opinion of the fertility of the soil, and the fabulous growth of wild fruits, and the amount of dye-stuffs, and the numbers of green turtles on the beach, led us to conclude that there was a fortune in it. And

we were not mistaken, as those acquainted with the history of the famous West India house of Crocker, Millett & Co., will assure them.

We arrived in good time in the harbor of Havre. After having registered our names at the hotel, we set out in company for the residence of Mr. ——. Hernando was with us. He ran ahead and pulled the porter's bell. It was answered by a stranger. I asked him if my mother (giving her name) and Mrs. Crocker were in. What was our astonishment when he told us that they, together with another American lady and a gentleman by the name of Shaw, had sailed for the United States four weeks since; that Mrs. —— had disposed of all her effects, and returned home to stay the remainder of her days.

The porter was able to give all these particulars, as he had been in their service since Job's capture and retention by the British man-of-war.

We had passed them on the way! I had a question on my lips I wished to ask the porter, but hesitated, both because it was of a nature hardly proper to propound to a servant, and also because I feared an unwelcome reply. Mr.

Crocker was already assured, for the porter had distinctly called her by name.

After a little delay, during which Crocker inquired about his son, and the porter had replied satisfactorily, I thought the poor fellow would go wild with delight. Again I ventured to inquire.

"Can you tell me the name of the American lady who sailed with Mrs. ——— and Mrs. Crocker?"

"O yes," he said, "it was Singleton. She was a widow, and the gentleman accompanying seemed to be a suitor for her hand."

"Do you know," I then inquired, "whether he met with any success?"

'Well," he replied, "from what I could gather from bits of conversation, I concluded that he had been rejected several times, but had at last obtained *her promise to become his wife.*"

This sentence staggered and sickened me. I felt as if I should die. The porter, noticing my sudden illness, gave me a glass of wine. He then said that perhaps he had been too free in answering our questions without first finding out our names and the object of this close inquiry.

The poor fellow seemed to be afflicted equally with myself when I told him that I was Henry Singleton, and that Mr. Shaw had returned to America to marry my wife.

He, however, gave me reason to hope to intercept the event. It was now August, and he said that he distinctly understood that they would not be married until the holidays.

You may be sure that the interval before the sailing of the next vessel to New York was painful enough. We occupied some portion of the time, however, in searching out the friends of our deceased comrades on St. Columbo. The captain's wife, to whom I bore the miniature portrait, the rings and certificate of treasure, at the same time with the news and particulars of his death, was a very interesting woman. Though the bearer of unwelcome news usually has an unkindly office, yet she seemed to cling to me as if I was a connecting link between her departed love and herself. She said she had nothing now for which to live. One by one her four children had been taken from her, and although she had long since concluded that she was a widow, she still held on to a single gleam of hope. Others

had been shipwrecked, and long, long afterwards had returned, as ourselves were present examples. She asked us as a special favor if she might return with us to America. Her fortune was small, and with economy she could subsist without assistance. She had no near relatives in France, and one sister had emigrated to New York many years before. She was a woman of great depth of feeling, a well-informed and richly cultivated mind, and a gracefulness of manner suited to the highest position in society.

We consented to her request, and assisted in completing her business arrangements, and then we took passage again on the ship "La Belle France," bound for New York and advised to make the voyage in *thirty-five days!*

And now adieu to France for ever! On the ocean wave once more for home, family, happiness! So thought we; so we said. But alas! for all human calculations! We sailed proudly into New York harbor. As soon as permitted, we made our way to the shore. Again we recorded ourselves at the Merchants'; and again we started to find our hearts' treasures. But where were we to look? I thought of Mr. Olcott's

agent and executor, and immediately applied to him. But he met us with the sad news that "La Marsellaise," the ship upon which they sailed, had been wrecked on the southern shore of Long Island, and, as far as known, there was but a single survivor, and he a sailor from before the mast.

How can I describe my feelings at this announcement! Blame me, if you will, yet make some allowance for the weakness of human nature, when I tell you I rushed from the office of the lawyer and into the nearest den of traffic I could find, and called for brandy, and drank, and drank, and drank until I was thoroughly unconscious and entirely oblivious to all the awful reflections with which my mind, sobered, must necessarily be filled!

The shock was terrible. My hopes all blasted, the beautiful prospect which I had indulged for so many years eclipsed and thoroughly darkened! I do not plead all this as an excuse for my indulgence. If it was a vice, it was produced from the impulse of despair.

The time during which I was held by the monster is to me a vast blank. All seems buried

in a sea of oblivion. When I came to myself in part, the recollection of the great facts of my adversity appeared at first a horrible dream; but chrystallized gradually into the truths that they were, my brain would immediately take fire, I would lose all control of myself, and nothing but drink would satisfy me, and nothing but drink would answer the purpose of a sedative. So that it was at once my craving and my medicine.

This condition was really appalling. It was worse than death.

My good angel, during all this period, was Crocker. Perhaps he remembered my attentions to him as a poor demented man on the island of St. Columbo; at any rate he watched over me as a mother watches over her child. He believed the shock would expend itself, and that I would again become myself.

His faith and patient working were at length rewarded. At first, when the favorable change began, I was so mentally enfeebled that I wept like an infant. Gradually, however, I became stronger, and uncontrollable sobbing took the place of the delirium of drink. From this time

forth I was never intoxicated ; yet from this time also I have steadily consumed the amount of rum which I purchase every week at our village store.

I can not fully account for the fact that Crocker was not so shaken by the common disaster which had befallen us both. It may be that his hope of ever again meeting his wife and child had so long a time before utterly died out, that it had not thoroughly enkindled again ; or it may be that his grief revived and held him in a manner quite as profound as my own, but never having been a victim to strong drink, he did not seek that as a means of relief.

O! it is of the nature of suicide thus to drown into oblivion the God-given and divine faculties of the human soul ; to stupify and benumb those parts of the human condition made to feel both joy and sorrow, and which God himself aids to endure the severest strokes, in order that they may be properly disciplined and developed. It is cowardly, too, just as the suicide is always a coward. It is a flight from danger when the duty to stand up firmly and nobly is so ardent. I make this acknowledgment with shame now,

as I look back upon this and other like transactions in my history. And if there were no other argument of a more selfish and sensuous character to enforce temperance and endurance, this ought to be sufficient.

When I fully came to myself—a true prodigal—I went again to my Heavenly Father, whose readiness to forgive far exceeds our disposition to ask his forgiveness. I found relief in prayer. I resolved to begin anew. And although I have run a risk I could never recommend others in still indulging in drink statedly, yet my mind has never since given way, and I have continued until this day.

My first impulse, after my recovery, was to ascertain precisely the place of the wreck, and to confirm for myself the report that all had perished.

I came to this place and purchased an ordinary fishing smack, provided it with all neces sary furniture and food, and, with Hernando, set sail with the view of thoroughly scouring the beach of Long Island in search of relics of the wreck at least, if not of some rescued but undiscovered living soul.

Our search for several days was utterly fruitless. Our inquiries of the inhabitants of the hovels which lie scattered here and there along the beach, all brought out the fact that there had been a wreck somewhere farther to the eastward, but no one knew precisely the locality, nor had they discovered any vestige of the wreck.

This led me to conclude that perhaps it might have occurred upon some one of the numerous little barren islands which lie several miles off from the beach which connects with the main land.

We resolved to search them. We found one inhabited by a single man. He met our boat as we drove it through the breakers which beat upon his desolate islet, with a look of surprise, and I thought, also, of distrust and indignation. What could have induced a human being to select such a place for a habitation, I could not conceive. I resolved at a suitable time to make the inquiry, which I did, and found him to be a veritable hermit. He had been an outcast from home, had passed through a checkered experience of reverses and grief, had been thoroughly dis-

gusted with the hollow shams of society, and its unforgetting and unforgiving practices, because so shackled by conventionalities, that he had made himself dead to the world, and had found contentment in living by himself. His case so nearly resembled my own that I immediately had a fellow-feeling for him, and it led to this solitary mode of life, which I have followed here for so many years.

When I asked him respecting the wreck of the vessel, he replied that it had occurred on his island, and that its ruin was now lying on the side opposite to where we had landed. And when I asked him if there were any survivors, he replied that there were three, all of whom were the inmates of his home. He said they were an old woman and two children.

I told him to lead us to his house. He said we need not go far. So turning around a small group of stunted cedars, he said, "Here we are."

I looked for a house, and there, made up of cedar boughs with pieces of wrecks, with a beautiful female figure-head over the door, and the whole almost buried in the sand, was a hovel which, judging from its external appearance,

was hardly a tolerable stable for cattle. I entered it, and found a room nicely carpeted with the finest carpets that ever came from an English loom, and hung with mirrors, heavily corniced, with windows made of the bull's eyes and cabin lights of ships ingeniously fastened together, a lounge, sofa, and other luxuries, such as would befit the finest mansion in New York City. The room was large. Opening out of it was a smaller room, into which he ushered us, and there, lying upon a bed, was an old woman, and two children, a girl and a boy, were seated near by, the one about seven and the other ten years of age.

The shock was severe, but O how joyful! They *were my mother and my daughter, and the boy was the son of my dear friend Crocker.*

I approached the bedside. My mother had just awoke from a slumber. She looked at me long, scanning every feature of my face. I said, "Mother, do you know me?" She looked surprised. "Mother, I am Henry." Again she looked bewildered. I stooped over and kissed her, and she drew me to her and held me in a long, long embrace. For some time she could not speak. At length she said, turning her eyes

upward: "O God, it is enough! I have lived to see him once more. Now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace." "No, no, mother," I said, "you are not going to die. I am sent here to preserve your life and to take you to my home."

During this time the two children were looking on with eyes staring and mouths agape. "Henry," said my mother, "don't you know your child?" I seized the little girl, who struggled to free herself from my grasp, and fairly covered her with kisses. I had not seen her since she was a little babe in her mother's arms, and greatly emaciated with the scarlet fever. Her picture, however, which I carried with me, had faithfully portrayed her features. Now she was mine.

My pleasure in this was darkened by the fact, which my mother confirmed, that my dear wife had perished, and that they knew of no others besides themselves saved from the wreck.

CHAPTER THE TWENTIETH.

BRINGS THE WRECKMASTER'S PART OF THE STORY TO A CLOSE.

I DO not know whether the solitary islander was more pleased than surprised and sorrowful. Pleased he could not but be, that his rescued favorites had found friends; surprised he certainly was, that they had been discovered; and sorrowful none the less that he was to lose their society. For although solitude has its charms, yet man can not be entirely alone for any great length of time without pining for society. He doubtless thought he was to have the very company he desired, and yet maintain his determination to exclude himself from the populated world.

He gave me an account of the wreck, which was fearful. How he saw the ship driven up

among the breakers on the outside shoals—how he saw the boats manned, and almost as quickly capsized in the waves, and the freight of human souls given to a watery grave—how a few of them were washed ashore near to where he was standing, and among them our party, who were with the captain and officers of the ship in one boat—how he sought to rescue them, but all to no purpose, except in the cases of the three who were now in his house—how he buried the other two females and a well-dressed gentleman, whom I immediately set down as poor Shaw, and how he carried my mother bodily to her room and placed her upon the bed, from which she had never since risen—and how the children mourned the loss of their mothers, whose bodies they saw buried, together with Shaw's, in a common grave.

I visited the spot of their interment, and marked it more distinctly than he did, in view of the future removal of their remains, and then made ready for our departure homeward. But here I was met with an unexpected revelation, which at once explained to me the earnest desire of my mother to die, and at the same time

made the face of her deliverer to shine like that of an angel. *My mother's limbs were completely paralyzed.* Yet this man, whom society had spurned, and who, if believed to be alive at all, was set down as a worthless character, had been the missionary to the needy and the suffering. There were none near to commend or to praise his works; therefore it was no base motive that prompted him. He had nothing to gain. Pure, unselfish love was the impulse that moved him. It was the Christ in the man. So the inspired Psalmist speaks of "God's hidden ones," those whom the world does not know or regard, who are "hidden" from human applause; but they are "God's;" known to Him, beloved by him, influenced by him, commended and blessed by him. This shaggy, burnt, lone inhabitant of a little island of scarcely ten acres, was such an one. O, how I blessed him! He was my brother indeed. And you may rest assured I did not forget him. Although I never persuaded him to live again on the main land, yet he and I have been companions on many a perilous occasion, when the winds and the waves have driven some unsuspecting ship upon the shores;

and he and I have shared together many joys and some sorrows. And one of the bitterest pangs of my life was when I laid his body in the very spot of earth from which I removed the remains of my dear wife and her two friends.

I brought my mother and my child to New York. We felt lonely, and I was there as if dead. I purchased the property on the Sound, where, under the great trees, I was married, and for a time resided there. Mrs. Le Fevre, the wife of the French captain who accompanied us to America, was one of our household. Mr. Crocker took change of his little boy. Through his mother, the boy was heir to a large fortune. The management of this was placed in Crocker's hands, and brought him a handsome income; so that he lived and still lives in New York City in elegant luxury, a man beloved and honored in his gray hairs, and whom I am proud to call my friend.

A singular fascination was thrown round me to live directly on the sea shore. Whether it was from my four years' residence in St. Columbo, or from the circumstance of my wife having been drowned in the waters, or my mother and

child rescued from them, or sympathy for the old man of the island, I do not know. At any rate, I could not resist it, and so I purchased this place. I thought I was alone, but I was mistaken. The father of that man on the hill, whose boys are made up of one part man, one part bull, and one part horse, and who presumes to insult me, was my enemy in college. He never forgave me for a victory I once gained over him in the recitation room, and which drove him in shame from the college to the race-course. He was the man whom Mr. —— used as his effective tool to ruin me at the horse race, and the money gained at that time and in that manner was the foundation of his vast fortune. He—that man who has inherited his father's hatred with his ill-gotten wealth, slandered me to my neighbors here, with whom I was disposed to live upon terms of social intimacy, so that those of them who did not look upon me with suspicion, as if I was some fiend in human shape, regarded me with disdain, as one whom they set down as an incorrigible drunkard and vagabond, though I challenge them to point out a single occasion when any one of them ever saw me,

since residing here, preceptibly under the influence of intoxicating drink.

So I fenced in my place and made it seem like a prison. I got me some dogs, who watch over my property. I kept my faithful servant Hernando near me. And here I brought my mother, and for twenty years she lay in yonder room a helpless paralytic. I have only done my duty by her. But in yonder clump of willows (pointing out of the window to a marble monument) she sleeps; yes, she sleeps that sleep that knows no waking on the earth, but which is regarded by Him of whom it is written "For so he giveth his beloved sleep."

In my Westchester house I left my daughter. Mr. Crocker made it, by special arrangement, his summer residence, and Mrs. Le Fevre was the governess of his and my child. Once a week they come here and spend the day with me. This was their custom until their school-days were ended. Then his son went to college, and my daughter to the Moravian school at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. They both graduated with distinction. Young Crocker entered into business. the same business which bears his name, and

which is carried on chiefly with the island of St. Columbo, in which I still hold a considerable interest.

I never had the office of wreckmaster formally conferred upon me. I assumed it. I never received any pay for services rendered. But I have received the blessings of many a dying one, whose last messages I have had committed to me, and which I have conveyed to their living friends. And I have had the satisfaction of saving many precious lives—lives which, in the way of subsequent usefulness, have proved that they were precious. This profession I have followed until now. I am fourscore years of age, and shall continue it so long as God shall grant me sufficient health and strength.

Still addressing us as he concluded his narrative, the Wreckmaster added:

Doubtless, young gentlemen, you, in common with the rest of the community, have wondered at the periodical arrival of the fine coach at my rough wooden gate. For their satisfaction it may as well be told, when you shall make public the narrative I have given you, that the lady is my own daughter, the gentleman is her hus-

band, and the son of my friend Crocker, and the little girl is their child and my grandchild. Her name is Helen Singleton Crocker. This velvet-bound Bible, which was saved by her mother when they both were taken from the jaws of death, I keep only as the memento of those early days when I was the young husband and father, and she who is now the mother was the little babe in arms; and I purchased it and sent it over the seas from France to her.

This picture I carried with me from the time I received it, in a private way, from my wife, from whom I was separated by my wicked course of conduct, and during the time that it was supposed her love must slacken towards me. That, too, is to become the property of my granddaughter.

This diamond (pointing to the one he wore during the time he was giving me the above facts in his history) I took from the clothing of a dead body. It is of great value. I have been offered eight thousand dollars for it; but a million could not buy it. Upon the same body I found papers which were sufficient for its identification, together with a large amount of

legal documents. The gentleman had resided in western Pennsylvania, and, from his correspondence, I judged that he was both a husband and a father. I carefully buried the body, and having satisfied myself that the papers secured were of great value to his heirs, without communicating with any one I made the journey to Pittsburg to find them. It took me a full month during parts of November and December. When I found them, they had not heard of the wreck, but were expecting their loved one home in season for the holidays. It was a hard task for me to perform, but it had to be done. My appearance was rough, so that I was invited into the kitchen. I began a conversation about things in general, and had not proceeded far before the lady stopped me, and invited me into the family sitting-room. I see them now, that beautiful young wife with one chubby, curly-headed boy making cob-houses on the floor, and another sweet little baby of not many weeks of age in her arms, and which the father had never yet seen, and the mother of the son, the grandmother of the children, with her cap drawn closely over her smooth gray hair, sitting in the

opposite corner of the chimney, knitting blue yarn stockings. I see them now, so cozy in their home, so happy in the prospect of having their son, husband, and father with them. But it had to be done, and I was the chosen messenger to do it—to announce to them that he lived no longer, to tell them that from the sea his soul had gone upward to its God—that his body then lay beneath the sands and under the shade of the only tuft of cedar the shore afforded. Next only to the one that is stricken is the suffering of him who must tell the news that wounds. I did it. I remember the embarrassment on my part. I remember the look which seemed in part anger, in part surprise, in a great part horror, as it spoke from the countenances of wife and mother. Well, this was only one of many such scenes I have been compelled to witness. It was heart-rending to hear their wails and to see their sufferings.

But time is the great healer. So in this case after the storm there came a calm. I was then prepared to deliver the documents in my possession. I found that they secured them in the possession of a large inheritance. When I was

about to leave, she selected this diamond from among the other valuables, and forced it upon me by way of acknowledging my services. I have entertained those friends here, for they often come to visit my little plot yonder, (pointing again through the window over towards his mother's monument).

This dirk, this violin bow—see the jewel in it, this shoe (taking up a tiny baby's shoe), this lock of hair, this bone (picking up a human thigh bone), this piece of wood (apparently the spoke of a wagon wheel),—well, each of them, and, indeed, almost all that you see about us here, has a history connected with the sea. Some would tell of crimes dark and bloody, and which are calling to-day to Heaven for vengeance. Some would tell of deeds of heroic daring, and which have never yet appeared in books of veritable story or of romance. Some would tell of love such as only mothers know who are compelled to see their children perishing before their eyes, while they are powerless to help or to save them. Some would tell of physical suffering such as the imagination can not conceive. Each one has a peculiar history.

And they are for the most part my preachers. I learn from them what vices to shun, and that the way of the transgressor is hard. I learn that there is much of good in man which is not manifest, but, like to the evil, waits for the occasion to bring it out. I learn, too, that life is very uncertain, and that there is much of suffering. And I learn from my preachers, too, that there is a God and a judgment. Fool would I be to deny the testimony that has been thrust before my observation in favor of the Christian religion as a comforter in suffering and in the dying hour. Some of those numerous relics tell me constantly of this. I believe it, I feel it, I know it.

The Wreckmaster finished his story, which was partly extemporized, and partly from memoranda which were very neatly prepared. These he gave to me after Charley Cromwell and myself had solemnly promised not to make it known until after his decease. This promise has been faithfully kept. But there is a sequel to his story which the following chapters will disclose.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-FIRST.

CONTAINS THE SEQUEL TO THE WRECKMASTER'S STORY.

THE next visit Charley Cromwell and myself made to our old friend was by special invitation. He had prepared for us a very pleasant surprise, We found him in the parlor portion of his house. Every thing was arranged with scrupulous neatness. Hernando was busy giving a few finishing touches to the pictures and numerous articles of curiosity, placing them in various odd and tasteful forms to attract and arrest the attention.

Quaint old vases, each of a different pattern, and yet exquisitely beautiful, with sculpture and paintings of classic models, were filled with bouquets of wild flowers intermingled with sprigs

of full-grown asparagus. A leopard's skin of wondrous size served as a rug before the fireplace, where was burning a small, cheerful fire, to take off the dampness of the long-closed room. In every nook, upon every corner of mantel-piece, and picture frame, door and window, was perched some curious bird—here a water fowl, and there a parrot; and sprinkled along the tops of the door frames, humming birds, each of a different species. As if to offset the beautiful, and yet to preserve the curious, a perch above the mantel-piece contained about a dozen frogs and toads, each of different kinds. The space between the chimney and the wall, on one side, and reaching from the ceiling almost to the floor, was filled with beetles, bugs, and moths, in great numbers, pinned through the back, and fastened upon a painted cardboard. The other side was hung with fish, some of them stuffed and some only in the skeleton. Shelf over shelf in other spaces were filled with shells of all hues, and arranged with exquisite skill. Still others had pieces of wood, bones, portraits in ivory, money purses, leaves of books, and other articles which were suggestive

mementoes like those we mentioned as being in the living room or kitchen. It was a museum, plainly showing the student in the curious old Wreckmaster.

The floor was laid with fragments of carpets, or rather with complete small patterns of the richest materials, goods which he had collected at different times from the wrecks he had visited.

We consumed considerable time in examining these curious things before our host entered. When he came, we were still more astonished by the style of his dress. He was no longer the rough old customer we had been accustomed to see, but who at times wore a ruffled shirt-bosom adorned with a brilliant diamond. He was now the complete gentleman, his hair dressed as usual, his beard flowing down over his chest, and his clothing of the best material, and cut after the modern style, and yet suited to his advanced years. He grasped us each with one of his hands, and said:

"Once more, young gentlemen, I 'm glad to see you. I asked you here to-day to make you acquainted with some of my friends. They will be here presently."

As he spoke, the loud barking of the dogs at the gate announced visitors. The old man met them at the door, and ushered them into his parlor. First he introduced an old gentleman apparently of about his own age. "This," he said, "is my very dear friend, Mr. Crocker; and this," bringing forward a lady, "is my daughter; and this," pointing to the gentleman at her side, "is her husband, who is also Mr. Crocker; and this," he said, lifting up a young miss of about twelve years of age, "is my granddaughter, Mary Singleton Crocker."

After we had paid our respects to these, as well as boys of our age could do, blushing meanwhile back to the temples, the Wreckmaster proposed a walk.

He took us by a well-worn path through the garden and a little clump of walnut trees, to the little cemetery; he opened the gate and went in: Without speaking a word, he took off his hat, and bending down, kissed a grave, and then he did the same to another grave. O, what a picture that was! This octogenerian, kneeling there, his white locks driven back by the wind, thus manifesting his devotion to wife and

mother. The tears were streaming down his cheeks. With a voice choked with emotion, he led his daughter first to the grave of his wife. "See here, my child," he said, "here lie the remains of your mother; her soul is yonder," pointing his finger to the skies. "She was buried without a service being read by any ordained priest. But here she lies in the hope of a glorious immortality. I embittered her brief existence by my accursed habit of drink, and this hastened her death; and here," he said, leading them to his own mother's grave, "lie the remains of her whom I called *mother*, although but little did I enjoy of her love and care. She was a woman mistaken and wronged, mistaken on her part by not conciliating her husband; and wronged on his part by not knowing the nature of a woman loving, and properly expecting a manifestation of love in return. I make no application of this, my children; I leave you all, and these, my young friends, in whose future welfare I am greatly interested, to make it for yourselves."

This brief sermon could not be lost upon such a company. The old man himself, there and

then, was a sermon. He was an example of human weakness, at the same time of remarkable filial devotion and marital love. His life for himself was almost a failure, but it was destined to bring forth fruit in old age.

We returned to the house from our pious pilgrimage. Having entered, the old man charged his daughter never to neglect that spot, and he said to us, "Young men, I too shall soon lie there. If ever you are tempted by drink, enter the gate, and think of me, *and know that the cure for intemperance is prevention rather than reform.*"

We dined together very sociably. I became very much interested in little Mary Singleton Crocker. When we separated, her father and mother both invited us to visit them in New York. Of course we gladly accepted the invitation, and the days and years following echoed my footsteps as they went up Broadway and turned down Chambers street, and ascended the steps of number one hundred and forty-two. Charley went with me a few times, but at length he concluded that three spoiled the company, and, discreet fellow that he was, he withdrew.

We both entered college. Four years of routine study brought us our diplomas. Commencement day arrived. We were men.—Arrayed in our academic robes, we marched from the old college through the campus and down the streets of New Brunswick to the church. What a spectacle! The church was filled throughout with the beauty and elite of the city and surrounding country. Hundreds had come from their distant homes prompted by their love for the college, or interested in some one of the graduates. There was not a foot of standing room. As, for the first time I faced an audience, I looked down from the platform, I trembled with emotion. The band struck up an inspiriting air, which was rewarded by the applause of the vast multitude. Then followed a prayer from a gray-headed clergyman; and then the addresses began. Introduced by the venerable President, each one arose, and first making obeisance to the Governor of the State and the other *ex-officio* dignitaries present, he turned to the audience and delivered his speech. The first was the Latin Salutatory. Probably not fifty among the thousands present under-

stood a word, yet it was received with rapturous applause.

During this address I cast my eyes in vain over the audience to find the one person whom, of all others, I most desired to see. My heart sank within me. I feared that my speech would certainly be a failure.

Others followed. They were, each in turn, greeted with rounds of applause, and at the close of their speeches, a shower of bouquets fell all about them. The dread moment came for me. As yet I had not met the eyes I searched for and expected. I feared that some accident had prevented her from being present. I felt cast down, almost to despair.

I rose and went forward. A blindness came over me. My voice, as well as my knees, trembled as I uttered the first sentences. Then the whole multitude appeared one undistinguishable mass. I seemed to lose consciousness, and yet I observed that the house settled down into breathless silence. My voice rose with my theme. Without thought my gestures followed the sentiments I uttered. When I came to a close, for a second I stood like one petrified. I

never knew before that I was an orator, but the very desperation of the effort made me eloquent. I retired in my confusion without making the customary bow to the audience. The flowers fell thick and fast around me. I gathered them up, and eagerly looked at the cards appended to them. Alas! there were none from her! I felt worse. All the applause was no gratification. After I had taken my seat again, a little boy made his way up the steps of the platform, and placed upon the table in front of the President a curious basket of flowers. They were arranged in conical form. The act of setting down the basket made the flowers to fall luxuriously over its side, and there was revealed a miniature bird cage, and just at the instant the band were beginning to play, a beautiful canary within set up a loud, shrill song, which was heard in every part of the house. The audience applauded the dear little fellow to the echo. The President, smiling, handed me the cage, saying, in a whisper, "I guess there is something suggestive in this. Here is the cage and the bird in it."

"Yes," said the Governor, "and the bird sings, too."

I blushingly took it, and looked at the card. Well—I was content. She was here, and had witnessed my successful effort. It was from Mary.

That was a proud day for me; but the night was even happier than the day.

I went to her hotel. I saw her alone; and there, in the excitement and exhiliration of the moment, I asked her the question which sealed my happy fate.

Three years after this I was a full fledged lawyer. A party were assembled at the old country house on the Sound. Beneath the great trees there stood the old Wreckmaster, upon the very spot where he stood nearly sixty years before, and where Dr. Livingston had united him in marriage to Helen Olcott. Now his granddaughter and myself there pledged our troth "until death doth us part."

If any of my friends wish to see me, they may find me, during the months from May until November, at the same place. I will give them a sail in my yacht, or a drive behind as handsome a span of horses as they ever saw. I will take them to where the fish love to congregate,

and teach them the angler's art. I will seat them at my right hand at a hospitable table, and pledge friendship in tea, coffee, or cold water. If they are *sick*, and *require* it, I will give them a glass of old port for their stomach's sake; and I fear I will test the capacity and the endurance of that important part of their physical constitution by the choicest of vegetables and fruits that a well-cultivated garden can produce.

Or, if they wish to see me on business, any one can tell them where "Little Knickerbocker," as they call me, can be found. My fees are moderate. For the "true widow and orphans" the counsel is gratuitous; but I do not profess to work for the wealthy without compensation. If any one asks why I do business, being sufficiently wealthy, or why I make a charge at all, why, I answer that is none of their business. I have schemes of my own, and, God helping me, I shall try to alleviate the sufferings of my fellow creatures, and especially those unfortunate through the accursed bowl.

CHAPTER THE TWENTY-SECOND.

DRAWS OUR STORY TO A CLOSE.

AS a lawyer, I had one case which was hard indeed, and yet it seemed as if justice was vindicating herself.

The oldest son of Jacobs, the man on the hill, (and, by the way, it ought to be stated that his real name was Davis, but that for reasons not very respectable, he was obliged to take the name of Jacobs,) came to me one day, saying that he wished my counsel. "It was not," he said, "a mere matter of law, and yet there was some legal point involved in it."

I told him to state the case, which he did in substance, as follows: "The property which my father had been enjoying, and by which he had

been enabled to secure so much, was entailed. The father was to have the free use of it until the youngest child should become of age, and then a new clause of the will was to take effect. The father was to share equally in the property with his children, after a certain stipulated sum had been taken from it, and the interest added to it from the year —— (more than fifty years before) down to the time of the youngest arriving at legal age, and the amount paid to Henry Singleton, if he should be living, or if not, then to his heirs or legal representatives. According to my grandfather's will, this part of it, which was separately sealed, was not to be opened until the youngest child should attain to her majority. This, as I said, occurred but recently. We had all been enjoying the property until this time, according to the provisions of entailment. When, last week, my father read this secret clause, as he was then permitted to do, he fell back in his chair and expired. It was from a stroke of apoplexy, caused as much from the fact that this Henry Singleton was the object of his special dislike, as from the loss of so much of his property. Until very recently,

this Singleton, who was an old drunken vagabond, lived a sort of hermit life, down on the neck near the bay. He has now disappeared. We understand that he has no living relatives, and I have come to ask your counsel how to proceed to have this part of the will cancelled."

After hearing his statement, I invited him to come to my city residence the next evening at eight o'clock.

At the appointed time he came. After a moment's conversation, I told him that I wished to introduce a few friends, and that they were, in some way, associated with his business.

I then threw back the sliding door, and led forward the old Wreckmaster. He was a wreck himself now. A second stroke of paralysis had very much broken him; but he was dressed like the gentleman he was by nature and position.

"Mr. Jacobs," said I, "this is Mr. Henry Singleton, otherwise known as the Old Wreckmaster."

The young man was thunderstruck. He turned pale. His tongue clave to the roof of his mouth.

The old man extended his hand, and cordially

shook that of the frightened young Jacobs. "I am really glad to see you, sir," he said. "I expected to have met your grandfather, whose name was Davis, upon the same business which has now called you here. I well know why he, in his repentant moments, made the clause in the will which transfers property to me to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars, calculating it at simple interest. It was my money of which he deprived me in a most base manner. Of course we shall claim the whole amount."

Then taking the young man again by the hand, he said: "I wish you a good-bye. Be honest; let fast horses and the wine bottle alone." He then tottered into the back parlor, and threw himself into an easy chair.

I then led forth Mrs. Crocker, who was on a visit to us, and introduced her. I then brought forward my wife, and informed him that these were respectively the daughter and granddaughter of the old Wreckmaster. I was just on the verge of saying "the old drunken vagabond," but the laws of hospitality forbade it.

Crestfallen and ashamed, the young man left the house. The next day he called at my office,

and made such an humble apology for misjudging the old Wreckmaster, and giving, as an explanation, his apparent habits and mode of living, that I forgave him from the bottom of my heart. He said it was no fault of his that we had been defrauded; and he hoped that his father's foolish enmity against the old gentleman might be forgiven.

I promised him that I would present the case in a favorable light to our grandfather. With this we parted.

To conform to the provisions of the will compelled the sale of Jacobs' country seat, together with all his blooded stock of horses. It seemed a sort of poetic justice. For it was just this that befell the old Wreckmaster when old Davis succeeded in poisoning his horse on the day of the great race.

But the results were far different. By some strange fancy, I took quite a liking for the eldest of the Jacobs family, and we became intimate. He and his brothers have entered into a co-partnership in the flour trade. They have become temperate in their habits, respectable members of the community, and one of them a

pillar in the Church. The two daughters have married plain farmers, and live in a well enough style near the home of their former luxury. So in this case, adversity proved an excellent corrective rod.

I almost forgot to say that I have a boy named "Henry Singleton Knickerbocker." He is the smartest boy that ever was born. He has the best development of body, the finest outline of face, the most majestic bumps of brains, the keenest and yet the kindest eye, the best shaped hand and foot, can say the brightest things for a three-year old you ever heard. If you say, "Ah, yes, that is because it is *his* baby; every father thinks the same of his own," well, then, bring them along. Appoint your judges; and which baby carries off the prize shall have it. I do not mean, though, the *one hundred thousand dollars* his great-grandfather left him, and which was recovered after so long a time from the Jacobs family.

It was not long after the transaction just narrated, when a sad procession wound its way through the hickory grove "down on the neck," and there, in a grave, between the one which

contained the remains of his wife, lost in the ocean, and that of the mother, the testimony of his most remarkable filial devotion, we placed the son and husband. Those who knew him loved him. And his works, to-day, follow him. "Requiescat in pace."

If this narrative shall seem to some to be too lenient towards the vice of intemperance while it aims to effect its remedy, let them remember that the mass of drunkards are thus, not from choice so much as from misfortune. They are objects of pity rather than harsh condemnation. For, generally, who are they who are overcome by this monster—strong drink? They are not your mean men, your stingy souls. I have heard of a man who had a soul so small that you could place it in the quill of a humming bird, and blow it into the eye of a red ant without making it wink. Such men never become drunkards.

Nor yet are they your cold, calculating men—men who can not laugh, and who, if they salute you, drop their hands into yours like a dead fish. Such men do not become drunkards.

But they are your warm-hearted men—men of generous impulses, who leap out of themselves to benefit a fellow-man, at a great sacrifice to themselves. Call to mind those whom you know as confirmed drunkards to-day, and see if this is not the case.

They are, therefore, objects of pity. They are weak in not being able to say "No" to an invitation to drink. They are weak in not mustering sufficient will-force to resist the temptation when trouble comes upon them. But do not curse them. Leave that to Him who judgeth righteously; but do you throw around them the arms of Christian love, and seek to lead them away from dangerous associations and tempting companions, and show them that human resolution alone is not enough to save them; but that they must seek a Higher Power, and that both power and mercy are readily given to him who asks for it.

One sentence which fell from the old Wreckmaster's lips ought to be ever before the young man's mind, to regard prevention in preference to reformation in this matter of drink.

When a man departs never so little from the

path of right, he is in danger of going far astray. This is *terribly* true in this matter. Take care of those *first* glasses, those little yieldings. Only this once, what harm, and so on. How common such expressions! *How awful the consequences!*

It is difficult to reform a drunkard. It is easy to keep from becoming one. Prevention rather than reform.

More persons become drunkards through the influence of others, than of their own choice. It is the invitation to drink that is worse than the yielding. The Bible pronounces a special curse upon those who induce their neighbors to take strong drink.

In order, therefore, to effect a remedy of the great evil of intemperance, there must be created a new public sentiment. Some of the conventional customs, now deemed polite, must be changed. For example: When, by your invitation, I sit down at your dinner table, you must not deem yourself remiss, nor must I deem you impolite, if you do not tender me a glass of wine. Or, when we make our New Year's calls, according to our old Knickerbocker custom, you must not tempt me by your brilliant display of de-

canters, and, on my part, I must not consider you niggardly because you limit your beverages to lemonade and coffee.

Ladies have a great deal to do in making drunkards. So they may do much in preventing their increase. And since it is themselves and their children upon whom the evils of the vice descends with such terrible force, it becomes them especially to exert themselves to stay the dreadful tide.

It is very hard for a young man, say from sixteen to twenty years of age, to refuse an invitation from a lady to take a glass of wine. He is young and timorous. In the presence of ladies he is nervous and excitable to a degree almost beyond his power of judgment. Susceptible to attention, when a young lady, dressed in attractive style, offers him wine, and it may be urges it upon him, saying, "It can not do you harm," or "Take it from *me*, won't you?" it is hard, very hard, for a young man to resist such an inducement. Ah! how many who, to-day, are full of woes, in poverty and disease, red-eyed and bloated, without character and without hope, who fell before the tempter in the form

of a woman, urging them to take a little wine!

Many persons become drunkards through a want of sympathy. As our story illustrates the effects of repeated and severe trials upon a mind already prepared to yield to demands for an artificial stimulus, so there are many like him who only need the arm of love thrown around them, and the voice of kindness speaking often to them, to save them from ruin. When a man is in misfortune, do not tantalize him. Do not even treat him with indifference, for *indifference kills*. Then is your opportunity. To neglect, it is to make yourself, in a measure, responsible for his downfall, if such should be his sad fate.

Men have become rich, and suddenly their wealth flies away; men have been elevated to positions of trust and honor, and some rival thrusts them aside; men have their households entered by frequent visitations of death, or of disgrace to some member, or of sickness, or insanity; will you aggravate their distress, will you neglect to persevere in showing your sympathy? Then those men will seek something to

make them forget trouble, and what will it be? What else but *drink, drink, drink!*

You will say they are wrong in yielding. So they are, and the terrible effects are their punishments. But they are weak, and they are under unusual pressure, and you are to be their ministering angel. You are to be in Christ's stead, and try to save them. Remember, "Even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

To my readers I say, "Learn to say '*No!*' To every invitation, '*no!*' To every temptation to drown trouble, '*No, I'll die first!*'"

The true philosophy is, *Prevention rather than Reform.*

THE END.

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